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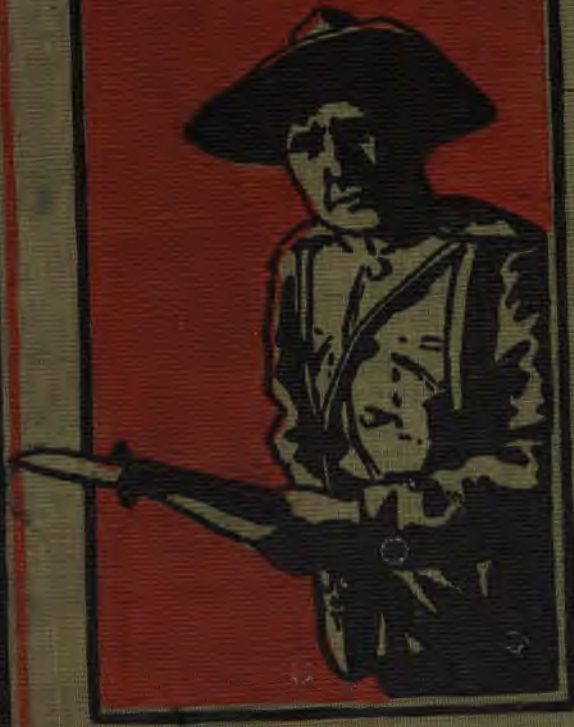
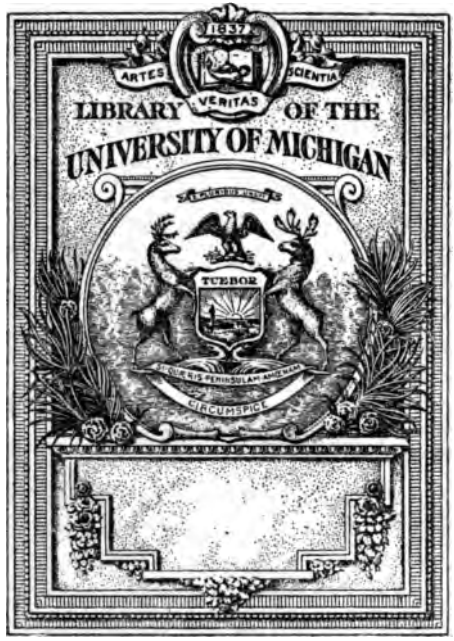
With the ROYAL CANADIANS

Stanley McKeown Brown





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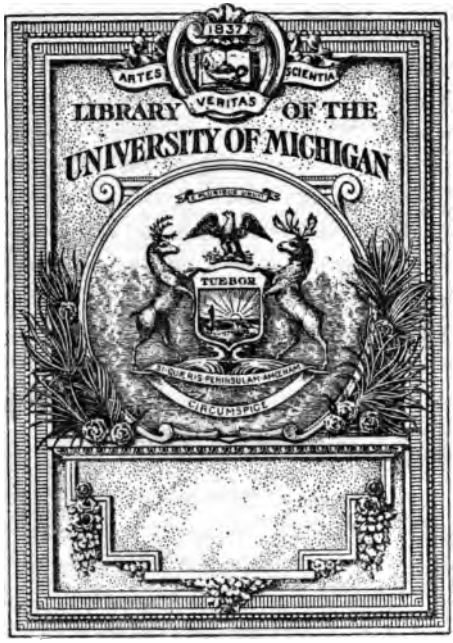

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With The Royal Canadians

By

Stanley McKeown Brown

War Correspondent.

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CONTENTS.

		PAGE
CHAPTER I.	On Active Service	1
CHAPTER II.	The Call to Arms	6
CHAPTER III.	En Route to Quebec	12
CHAPTER IV.	The Stay in Quebec	19
CHAPTER V.	The Keynote Sounded	28
CHAPTER VI.	The First on Board	34
CHAPTER VII.	On the "Sardinian"	37
CHAPTER VIII.	A Burial at Sea	51
CHAPTER IX.	Into the Southern Seas	53
CHAPTER X.	On Land at Cape Town	66
CHAPTER XI.	A Night Off, and A Meal	76
CHAPTER XII.	Off to the First Camp	81
CHAPTER XIII.	In the Sands of De Aar	93
CHAPTER XIV	Orange River Camp	101
CHAPTER XV	A Canadian Picket's Catch	112
CHAPTER XVI.	The Belmont Garrison	117
CHAPTER XVII.	The Christmas Dinner	127
CHAPTER XVIII.	The Sunnyside Sortie	132

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PAGE

CHAPTER XIX.
The Spirit of Unrest 135

CHAPTER XX.
The Pipes that Failed 141

CHAPTER XXI.
The Routine of a Day 143

CHAPTER XXII.
Picked the Winner—but Lost 154

CHAPTER XXIII.
First Force in the Free State 157

CHAPTER XXIV.
When the Weekly Mail Arrived 167

CHAPTER XXV.
A Move that was Shortly Stopped 170

CHAPTER XXVI.
Lord Roberts' First Visit 180

CHAPTER XXVII.
The First of the Mighty March 184

CHAPTER XXVIII.
Paardeberg 190

CHAPTER XXIX.
"Pom-Pom Tuesday" 205

CHAPTER XXX.
A Week Close to the Boers 208

CHAPTER XXXI.
Night Attack—Cronje's Surrender 211

CHAPTER XXXII.
Paardeberg's Aftermath 219

CHAPTER XXXIII.
To the Free State Capital 225

CHAPTER XXXIV.
The Stay at Bloemfontein 241

CHAPTER XXXV.
Fighting to Thaba 'Nchu 253

CHAPTER XXXVI.
Canadians under Shell Fire 263

CHAPTER XXXVII.
Heading for Kroonstadt 269

CHAPTER XXXVIII.
Pretoria at Last—and Home 278

PREFACE.

THIS book is written with but one object, and to that object alone I have endeavored to confine it. The organization of a Canadian Contingent for active service in South Africa has been the text for almost endless discussion. Statesmen have dwelt upon its importance, soldiers have debated its military value, civilians have lectured on its genesis and its probable results, and politicians have made it the football of their partisan ambitions. In the abstract it has been talked of, written of—and will be yet again.

But what of the expedition itself? Is it not well that some intimate record, unvarnished though it be, should be preserved of the doings of those thousand men, alive and dead, who brought to Canada her greatest glory and her widest fame? Even this may yet be attempted by abler pens than mine. But I have thought it reasonable to write in this book of the First Canadian Contingent as I knew it, from Toronto to Quebec, from Quebec to Cape Town, and from Cape Town to victory. The story will, at least, serve to recall some of the incidents and adventures with which our soldiers met, and to afford those at home some idea of the trials and discomforts which they so bravely encountered. Questions of

faces and hands like the crack-ends of a thousand lashes. Though these men were quite near the lines of their own regiment, and within a hundred yards of the tents, they were compelled to lie down flat on the ground for a moment with handkerchiefs over their mouths and faces to keep from actually smothering or choking; at the same time edging their way toward the lee side of a bale of pressed hay, behind which a few transport mules stood tethered with their heads turned from the storm. When they were able to see their way they slipped into the Corporal's tent.

As they lay face downward on the pulverized sand which formed the floor of the tent, they had time for a word or two.

"Had your grub, Corporal?" asked the hungry looking Private, as he ground his teeth on the sand which forced its way into his mouth on the last important query.

"No, and not much chance for it," was the reply, "but those cute Scotchmen of our lot are up at the Kaffir hut there, giving their features a treat by sampling strings of dried meat."

"How are chances for some of the dried meat?" timidly asked the Private, who had been a bank clerk in Canada. "It's the first Sunday I ever went with only one biscuit. I wouldn't mind a full course meal just now and ——." The sand cut his sentence short as it sifted through the flap of the tent with an uncommonly severe spurt.

"Go on," said the Corporal, "wish hard, while you're at it. But I've been through the North-

West affair in '85, and since then I joined the permanent force and had a taste of the Yukon trip, so I'm pretty well used to a few hardships. You tenderfeet will learn to hold your hunger before you are out here long;" and giving a smile tinged slightly with contempt for the dust-blown homesick Private, he looked at him with a scrutinizing glance which had the effect of bringing a redder background for the sand which was cemented on the young fellow's cheeks.

The boy of the ranks looked up listening to the tornado outside, where not even the high circle of frowning kopes which totally surrounded De Aar, save where the railway cuts through a pass, could be seen on that first Sunday morning in December. Now and again Kaffirs, who had been born and brought up in sandstorms, were made to wince as they turned their backs on the whirling dust-devils and grunted out a few choking gutterals to the mules they were driving, tethered together with long halter "rims," from one part of the desolate camp ground to the other.

"Well, Corporal," the ex-clerk had the courage to falter as soon as the hurt look on his own face had given way to a sickly brave smile, "how long could you go without eating anything in this country? How long could you live and campaign on one biscuit a day?"

"Oh, judging from what I have done in the Rebellion and on the northern trail, I should say a week without anything. Look at what Dr.

Tanner did! and a year at least on one biscuit a day; that is, as I've said, judging from what I have done before," and the Corporal inflated his then famished stomach and pushed his chest with apparent pride a little farther into the sand beneath him.

"I wonder how long I'd stand at the same rate?" and an appealing look came into the lad's eyes as he tried to fix them on those of the Corporal, though now almost blinded by the fitful gusts which blew through the smallest openings in the tent.

"Couldn't say," returned the Corporal, afraid to open his mouth and rather pleased to give such a terse and haughty reply to a question which he could see was a vital one to the Private.

"I suppose I could last out about half the time that you could," the younger one went on, and his slight form almost showed signs of trembling when he thought of such an ordeal, "but—still, you see, you've had the experience and—well—mine is to come."

"You'll get lots of it," said the Corporal with a nod, "watch what I do and you'll not be far wrong."

There was no reply from the slight soldier; there was simply a dizzy look in his eyes as he watched the Corporal get up when the storm had abated enough for the Non-com. to see his way outside.

The Corporal nodded to the Private with a

certain superiority in the twist of his head, and moving out of the tent as if on business bent, said hastily, "I have to see about ten men for a fatigue."

There is no doubt that the former bank clerk, then a Canadian Private, was much impressed with the greatness of the Corporal, and as the former found his way back to his own canvas lodging with a queer look on his face and his hand involuntarily reaching toward the front of his tunic in spasmodic and endearing strokes, he resolved that he would remember the grand lesson in self-control which had been so well taught to him by the hero of the Yukon and Rebellion. There is no doubt also that one other lay within hearing of that conversation taking no part in it, and that he saw the Corporal, after making a careful detour, rush for the Kaffir huts and secure a larger share of dried meat from the negroes than had any of the former alms-seekers.

I saw the Corporal devour what he had boasted he could do without, and if it was not done altogether in silence, it was at least in perfect solitude.

CHAPTER II.

THE CALL TO ARMS.

SCARCE was there ever a younger looking lot of soldiers recruited in a battalion than in the Royal Canadian Regiment of Infantry, the First Canadian Contingent that sailed from this country to fight Imperial battles in South Africa. Even after a year's hard campaigning they looked, as far as their faces could show, like a battalion of school-boys alongside most British regiments, though not with regard to physique —and they carried out, true to their appearance, youth's enthusiasm in every part of the African struggle. They had been fired at home with the proper spirit, which never left them, even after they had finished their 7,000 mile voyage over the trackless ocean and had landed on the Dark Continent. When the regiment paraded together for the first time it was noticeable that they were like a thousand boys in their teens, but they went as the representatives of ideal Canadian manhood, while mentally and physically they well upheld the honor of the country whose best sons they were. Right grandly did they take their places at the front as the cream of Great Britain's greatest colony; valiantly did they fight their way into the pages of some of the greatest

history which Britishers have ever made; and, when called on, right heroically did they face death in a far off land. And these same boys, though practically uninitiated, upheld honorably and manfully the best traditions of the British army.

There was scarcely a town or hamlet in Canada and certainly no city that was not all bustle and excitement when, in October, 1899, the call to arms came. Each separate community was ready with its representatives, anxious to put down on the roll books as many names as possible, and disappointed in many cases when more could not be sent.

The latent loyalty to the motherland showed itself in spontaneous outbursts that made the whole Dominion respond with the blare of music and the clank of arms. The recruiting stations were literally besieged with men, flushed with the enthusiasm that the enlistment of soldiers for Africa had caused throughout the length and breadth of all Canada. Men of all classes came. The banker vied with the farmer for a place in the lines, and followers of all professions competed in every way with regular soldiers to be among the first to offer their services. So eager were the men of this country to be off in defence of the Empire, that in many cases the applicants did not exercise proper judgment in even presenting themselves at the several recruiting points. The British height standard in the army is five feet four inches for men, but, since Canada had such a

plethora of good subjects to choose from, the Militia Department decreed that that standard for our South African Contingent should be raised two inches, so that none of the Canadians would be under five feet six inches. This of course, to save needless trouble, was particularly pointed out, and even then, hoping against hope as it were, hundreds presented themselves who had not the requisite number of inches in stature to allow of their enrolment. Enthusiasts, strong in spirit, but weak physically, crowded the barrack rooms of the country, knowing, as they must have known, that they had no possible chance of ever passing a proper medical examination. The Royal Canadians were a fine lot of men, but in the excitement and hurry of the time even some of that regiment slipped through or were blindly passed on by the recruiting officers and medical men, who were obviously unfit to undertake the task; and although it was not a frequent occurrence, still there were cases after the men had sailed where boasts were made regarding the "pull" that certain members of the battalion had had, whereby they were able to get on the strength of the regiment, where of course those same men knew that they had no right to be. There were many in the ranks who were under age, but since the settlement of that question generally rested with the man himself, it was scarcely the fault of the recruiting officers; but it certainly was not right to send any man when it was clear that he was physically incapable of

performing the active duties of a soldier. Fortunately, cases such as have been last mentioned were few, and proud one is to be able to say that the make-up of the Royal Canadian Regiment as they left Canada was one of a "thorough thousand."

What unbounded disappointment was felt by some of those who were rejected at the recruiting points can be best remembered when one recalls the several cases of suicide consequent on that rejection. Many did not thoughtfully consider the seriousness of the undertaking, and although there were few who were not anxious to be in the heart of the campaign when once the Canadians reached the front, still it is true that there were hundreds among that body of men who thought on leaving this country that they were going on one of the greatest outings of their lives,—a gigantic picnic. To those who went with such anticipations the trip was the surprise of their existence.

On the boat going out it was strange in some cases to note the change in a man's demeanor, especially after the first official word was received on board the "Sardinian" that there was still lots of fighting going on, that there would be the best of chances in the world to get to the front, that in fact the outlook was that the war had just started. Frequently was it said before the departure of the regiment: "You had better hurry up and get away or the whole affair will be declared off before the transport sails. It will be

all over long before you get there." Many were imbued with this idea to start with, but when we passed the SS. "Rangatira" at sea, and secured copies of the Cape Town papers, those who had had this prophecy instilled in them became more serious. The phantom picture faded, and war views took its place.

Once the eight companies had been recruited, when the strength of the battalion was made up, all eyes turned to old Quebec and the Ancient Capital, for a week at least, became the military Mecca of the Dominion.

In the hurry to be off, and the consequent preparations that each man had to make; in the excitement of the home leave-takings with the pulse of the country at fever heat, hundreds were unable to realize that their dear ones had gone till after they had taken their departure. They were buoyed up by the spirit of the times, and, swayed by the popular voice, they had no time to sit down and seriously calculate and rationally discuss the gravity of the situation. And thus it was, when the sailing orders came a couple of days earlier than was expected, that a feeling of grave unrest came over families and friends who had theretofore been enthused with the idea of having a father, a brother, or a sweetheart, on the First Canadian Contingent.

Both those who departed and those who remained behind, after having ceased to be swayed by the popular cry "To Arms!" were given ample time to meditate on the action that

had been taken. I knew of cases where fond parents communicated with departing sons at Quebec and asked them if at all possible to retrace their steps and come back to the homes that had just then begun to feel their absence. There is no doubt that in future cases of enlistment of regiments in Canada for the Imperial service the same grand heart-speaking enthusiasm will be rampant, but it is also true that the men who rushed so eagerly to drill hall and barrack room to be first on the lists, and who did actually go through the recent campaign will study the question most thoroughly before they take that step which may to them mean death. Some there are who are born with such an indomitable fighting spirit that nothing can restrain them, but the experience of a hard war campaign, especially when one has not been used to soldiering, takes away a lot of the glamor and tinsel which makes the army so attractive to laymen.

It is a glorious thing to fight for one's country, but it is a road, which, if journeyed on far enough, proves conclusively that "the path of glory leads but to the grave." These are facts, concerning the First Canadian Contingent at least, which cannot be overlooked, and to omit dealing at least shortly with this side of the Canadians' departure would be to ignore the feelings of thousands of the thinking people of the nation at least.

CHAPTER III.

EN ROUTE TO QUEBEC.

THE eyes of the Canadian people, then, turned pensively to Quebec, and the Ancient Capital contained for the time the heart of the whole Dominion. Many a home had sent out its bravest and best, marching to martial music, and from the middle of October to the last days in the month farewell demonstrations and glorious good-byes were the order, till, as the time drew near for the mobilization of the regiment, all thoughts turned with one accord to old Quebec.

Cities and towns all over the country were the scenes of the wildest jubilation, and all showed marvellous activity in their desire to give the departing soldiers a send-off that would live in their memories till their lives' end. The people of the Dominion, from the Atlantic to the Pacific, were astir and alive to the fact that this occasion should not be allowed to pass without their showing their great sympathy with the popular movement. Never could a people be more united concerning any movement. Instead of having the men for only one contingent, Canada stood ready, by the voice of the people, to send a hundred. Where was the city or village that did

not actually carry shoulder-high its volunteer soldiers to the depot *en route* for Quebec?

It was a more trying ordeal and a more tiresome task for the men of the First Contingent than even some of the after marches on the veldt proved to be. The population by the million turned out to cheer their fighters on, to shake them by the hand and wish them good luck and God speed, to admonish them with encouraging words and to press into their hands some last souvenir, that they might think when far away in a distant country of the love that awaited them here.

Then, packed with presents, each heavily laden train rolled out, bound for a rushing trip to Quebec. There was a spontaneous migration to the old French capital, and soon the long lines of cars emptied their human freight under the citadel's sullen rocks.

As each company entrained at its recruiting point a weary lot of men soon took refuge in the berths of the colonist sleepers which had been supplied to them, while officers somewhat later prepared for what might be called the first night of the campaign. Among the men at any rate, a difference was soon found between home life and the life of a soldier. It was "the gay life of a young recruit,"—which had from afar looked so dazzling,—with all the paint and varnish rubbed off. To those who had been used to downy beds of ease at home and soft inviting quilts and blankets, the experience of jumping into a berth

between a couple of horse blankets was a sudden change. At any rate those who had left the best homes behind them were the first to acknowledge that they were suited with the change, and they who would be most expected to do a little grumbling were the ones who kept an unlooked for silence.

Dining-cars on the trains and an excellent service supplied the men with a memorable meal to start with, a meal which months afterward they looked back on from the African sands and longed to have repeated, even if they could only get the bread they had without the butter, or the good coffee and tea, to say nothing of the sugar and milk. All the way down to Quebec from their different starting points the young soldiers were well looked after as far as eatables and bouquets were concerned. Bouquets are often pretty but they lack a certain life-sustaining quality that bread appears to have.

Seven o'clock was the usual time for retiring on the trains, and though there was no order to "turn in," nature demanded, after the hard day's work of being said good-bye to, that an early respite from hand shaking be taken. But how long could the men sleep without being aroused? How many stations or cross-roads would allow the troop trains to pass by without an ovation? The tiniest flag stations sent down extra bright banners and lanterns, with which came the Reeve of the township, the postmaster and his family, the country school teacher and his flock, the rural

minister and his congregation, to hold the train up. If there was a band, or the nucleus of any kind of musical organization within ten miles of the stopping place, it was present, and had been present for a couple of hours previous to the arrival of the train.

Then, as the gayly decked engines pulled in, the flags waved, the lanterns flashed, the band beat up lively airs, and the people clamored for the soldiers. For the Royal Canadians there was no chance of dreaming through these receptions, or sleeping past a stopping point. The car windows were raised, soldier heads were pushed out, and the good-bye jubilation was again indulged in. For fear the men might be hungry, milk pans heavy with cakes and sandwiches were passed around, and perhaps for the tenth time a nocturnal feast was indulged in. All these rural enthusiasts pressed for souvenirs to be brought back on the Canadians' return, and Mr. Krüger, late President of the South African Republic, must have had ten thousand faces to supply the popular want, so much in demand were the whiskers he prides himself in wearing. Not only did the men demand portions of that worthy's hirsute appendage, but the hair-pulling propensities of the women was noticeably conspicuous.

It mattered not what the size of the band at each place was, nor how many instruments composed it, the essential was that it should be at the station and make its presence unquietly apparent. The most wonderful band—next to the one-man

species—that I saw *en route* was one composed of two bass drums, a snare drum, and a couple of pairs of heavy brass cymbals, backed by as many strong men as there were pieces. Their hearty rendering of "The Maple Leaf Forever" and "God be With You till We Meet Again," was, if not exactly harmonious and distinguishable, truly pathetic and given with such a sense of loyalty as to be deeply touching. This band was heard till the Royal Canadians had passed the station for some miles, and rang in the ears of most of the men for days.

At another station where an interview with the sleepy soldiers was requested, there was no band, but in its stead came a trained (?) party of singers, who smote the air with their voices as vehemently as did the former cymbal and drum band. Their selections were of a purely religious strain, and proved a pleasant break in the monotony of brass bands. They also, in the short intervals between the rendering of standard hymns, proffered substantial food.

And so from east and west, from north and south on the way to Quebec the men were kept busy receiving the plaudits and congratulations of the people of the Dominion. Every province showed its unbounded appreciation of the move Canada had taken, Ontario, the banner province, leading in point of excitement. From that Province, as was natural, had enlisted a larger portion of the contingent than from any other, and there the feelings of loyalty and enthusiasm

found their widest vent. Yet the people of other sections of the Dominion were not less eager to testify the regard and admiration in which the boys were held, and nothing could exceed in warmth and genuine feeling the farewell ovations that were tendered the departing soldiers at Winnipeg, in British Columbia, and, indeed, at a hundred different centres of population throughout the country. In the Province of Quebec news does not spread so rapidly as in the more modernized districts of the west, and the passage of the volunteers' trains did not excite the same degree of attention. But when the contingent had gathered at Quebec, and were paraded for the last time before they embarked for the seat of war, the French inhabitants joined with their English friends in enjoyment of the spectacle; nor did they withhold their plaudits from the brave band of men, both French and English, who had offered their lives for the honor of Canada and the defence of England's flag.

On sped the trains through darkness and the early morning light, waking the residents of sleepy villages and quiet towns to a realization that the Spirit of War was abroad in Britain's empire,—that the drum-beat of England had indeed rolled around the world. It was not merely that a thousand young Canadians had enlisted to serve in a great and hazardous campaign. Nor was it even that the Dominion rejoiced in lending specific and tangible assistance

to her mother country in a time of stress. Underlying all the cheering, all the music, all the throbbing of a nation's heart,—underlying even those deeper and sadder emotions which came with the partings and the dread of an unknown future, there was one great thought—no less real because so seldom expressed. These men represented more than a martial spirit, more than a country's pride. They symbolized the far-reaching strength of Victoria's arm. They typified the all-pervading influence of Victoria's power. They told of an Empire newly aroused to a realization of its true greatness. They signified the result of centuries of colonizing effort, of generations of a colonizing policy whose aim had been to bind ever closer in one high destiny the new and growing nations of the earth. And, more than all, they stood for the highest type of civilization the world has yet seen, a civilization which insists on maintaining the equal rights of men wherever gathered,—a civilization whose threatened existence they, with tens of thousands of others from all the quarters of the globe, had been commissioned to maintain.

And so, at last, we reached Quebec.

CHAPTER IV.

THE STAY IN QUEBEC.

THE length of time the men stayed at the Ancient Capital was indeed shorter than had been anticipated. The first to arrive got there on Thursday, October 26th, and the last to report, the right half of "A" Company from Winnipeg, were on hand by Saturday; and in two days more the contingent started on their long ocean voyage.

At Levis the men bundled out of the colonist cars as quickly as they could, and as each company was formed up it presented a motley appearance, at least as far as dress was concerned. Soldiers who had enlisted from regular battalions were generally uniformed according to the style adopted by those regiments. Those who had recently joined battalions in order to increase their chances of being taken, were in most cases in civilian's clothes. Some wore Glengarry caps and kilts, others forage caps and rifle uniforms, not a few were in bicycle costumes, and one enthusiast for the sake of a more military appearance, was outfitted in an old discarded artillery uniform and the long boots in which he had ridden many a cross-country race. But they all

had loyal hearts alike, and that was the one uniform requisite for the occasion.

Before the ferry was ready to pilot these heterogeneous crowds across the St. Lawrence to Quebec they were flocked on the landing platform on the south side of the river. Two companions of one of the city companies stood waiting side by side in line.

"Where are we going to stay till the 'Sardinian' sails?" asked the first, rubbing his eyes and yawning.

"I believe at the Chateau Frontenac," the other replied, with a glance up at the grand hotel on the heights across the river.

"That will be all right I guess," the first went on, "but I heard we were going to be billeted around the city."

"You two will be billeted in the guard-room if there is not less talking in the ranks," joined in the Color-Sergeant, who always saw the humorous side of things. "There is a time and place for all things. Buck up!! Buck up!!"

This little pleasantry put an end to the speculations of the young innocents, and before they had time to form any more wild conjectures the gates to the ferry swung open, and with the rest of their company they surged on to the miniature troop-ship and were being carried for the first time toward the winding streets of Quebec.

Once landed on the north side of the river, and having been taken off the crowded ferry like a prize consignment of horses, the men read-

justed their formation and started down through the south-east part of the city back of the water front. Quebec, from an historical point, at least, had always held for the men an amount of interest, and now they were, the great majority of them, for the first time in their lives, passing up and down over the quaint, little old streets, which might have belonged to some crumbling city in Europe rather than to one of Canada's most worthy ports.

The men of the regiment marched on past the basins, crossing curious old draw-bridges and firmly-made piers, glancing now at the idle fishing smacks, with their short and rough French-Canadians slopping around the decks, preparing for sale, oysters, which they offered by the barrel. And the queer-looking two-wheeled trucks, with a ladder-like structure, well balanced on the axle, used for all kinds of moving purposes; the great ships that lay resting at the docks preparing for sea; the hump-backed horses, jamming their iron shoes between the crevices of the cobble-stones, seemingly trudging up hill all the time; the jabbering and gesticulations of the nervous French-Canadian inhabitants, all made up a new and strange world to the men who were making a short stay on their way to war. Though some of the soldiers may have heard before leaving their homes where they were to be quartered in Quebec, still all began to surmise as to where they were being led. But they had not long to wait, for farther down, on the verge of one of

the south-eastern piers, where the cold, lapping waters of the St. Lawrence slushed constantly against the piles of the curbing, stood the long, low, barrack-like emigration sheds, where new inhabitants of Canada are wont to be kept on landing. Here was the Quebec home of the Royal Canadians. Rain in torrents gave them a damp welcome. Soup by the boilerful was ready for them to consume. Once having tramped through the gates of the high picket fence which surrounded the rather meagre grounds of the place the men were bonded goods, and as they surveyed their surroundings and glanced at one another with a not unfrightened look, they seemed to realize for the first moment the army term, "confined to barracks."

With nightfall came their first barrack-room meal, and, while fast-talking servants helped the caterers to prepare the huge knuckles of meat, mushy potatoes and coarse bread in a steaming kitchen, the men's greasy tables were set up on the long verandah of the sheds, and they sat down, those who had them with greatcoats on, the more fortunate ones being on the side next to the wall, where the water dropping off the roof had not so much chance of running down their shivering necks. Hunger had attacked them, as it did many a time in the campaign later on, and they made good use of the time allotted for the meal.

The day before, these volunteers, the pride of Canada, had feasted in their own homes, and the

comparison of the food brought many a young soldier's mind back to the parental roof, back to the old houses of their boyhood; and, as if by some arrangement, it once having been started, the youthful young fighters rose and sang lustily, "Home, Sweet Home"—and when they came to the refrain, "There's no place like home," there was a pathetic reverence in the tone of the voices of those men which spoke clearly of the souls within them. Not, it must be understood, that these Royal Canadians were sorry they had come, but because the dawn of the great change between soldiers' and civilians' lives was breaking on them with an earnestness which had scarcely been anticipated.

Supper over, on the long, empty floors of the gigantic shed, the companies and sections were allotted their sleeping space. Pillows, straw mattresses and blankets were served out at dark and greedily taken possession of by the men of the battalion, who were anxious for some place whereon to lay their sleepy heads. The ends of the long rows of straw ticks were choice positions, and, as might be supposed, there was some speculation and discussion as to who should occupy these "lower berths." Both sides of the great box-stoves were also vantage points, and took the places of the "cosy corners" which had been left by some at home for ever.

Between meal time and the hour for retiring the men of the regiment gave themselves up, with scarcely a single exception, to the then

pleasant duty of letter writing. Every man was busy, and thousands of fingers worked almost as hard as they did exactly four months afterward digging cover for their heads on the battlefield of Paardeberg.

The temporary post office in the emigration shed was the busiest corner of the building, and the appointed mail clerks had an evening of ceaseless toil. Lieut.-Col. Otter, Major Macdougall, and Capt. Panet, in charge of the arrangements, had a thousand and one details to perfect; but when it was time for the men to cease writing and turn to their beds, the order of things was as good as could possibly be wished for, on the first night in camp. At 10.15 p.m. the bugle sounded "lights out," and the stillness which came over the well-filled dormitories was broken only by the heavy sleeping of the men, and the washing of the cold waves as they slushed in at the silent piers. Then did the work of the duty officer, Lieut. J. Cooper Mason, become less onerous, and he, too, was allowed to pass the quiet hours with less disturbance than had been before. A look at the sleeping soldiers just as the dawn began to break and one had a glimpse of a peaceful bivouac on the veldt, supplemented as the Quebec scene was by the additional comforts of pillows, mattresses and stoves—but yet how different it all was to the real bivouacs on the sand, where covering was scanty and the stores were scarce! It was a realization of night in war time, but even with this idea suggested it proved afterward,

when the reality came, to be a palace compared with a hermit's hut!

And so the following nights in those prison-like sheds became a repetition of the first, save for the fact that on each succeeding night men were allowed out on pass to explore the city at their leisure.

Early the first morning before the huge hinged gates were unlocked, the same two chums of the Toronto regiment stood at the back entrance to the sheds, washing without soap in a pail of water, used at the same time by fifteen others anxious for their morning ablutions. They were able to get one wet towel between them before some other over anxious soldiers appropriated other parts of it.

"Staying at the Frontenac?" the one who had been first to speak the day before, sarcastically, though blandly, asked.

"No, I have been billeted," and without a further discussion of the joke referred to, the young men who had been made wise the night before by the clicking of a bolt on the fence gate as they marched in, sat down to some thin soup and mechanically cut bread, which latter had done duty on the greasy board tables the night before.

Visions of a grand hotel or even of billeting for them had faded with the sun of the previous day. Their day dreams had scarcely been realized. It was a rude awakening!

A close observer of the habits of the Royal Canadian Regiment must admit that they were

an inquisitive thousand, who made the best of all opportunities for seeing new things, so that the parts of Quebec which were not thoroughly searched by them were few.

As soon as passes were issued and men were able to appear at the emigration shed gate, properly dressed for walking out, there was a general advance made on hotel dining-rooms, and on the old fashioned, but well-regulated and out-of-the-way restaurants, which abound in the city. Scarce was there a cosy eating apartment in the cafés or clubs that did not have its little coterie of uniformed men, making the most of a well-chosen meal. All the best hotels, and some of the worst, presented an animated appearance on the nights preceding the departure of the troops. They were the last nights on which the men might "stand easy" before being called to "attention." Caleches rattled incessantly over the lumpy stone-paved streets, carrying parties of soldiers around the town; jolly, singing crowds who enjoyed their interim liberty as only those who have been recently deprived of it can.

Each party had its headquarters at some hospitable café. Needless to say that the rendezvous of the two chums of the city regiment was at their long-looked-for Frontenac, and that they were among the leaders of the first batch to apply for their passes from the shed. Men who walked up town when going out often drove back at the expiration of their time, to remind themselves of what the last privileges of a civilian were. It

was at Quebec that the Royal Canadians secured the reputation of being free money-spenders, a propensity which never left them all through the South African campaign.

Headquarters for the officers of the regiment were at the Citadel, where the officers' quarters were crowded with beds and baggage. The mess of the officers was at the Garrison Club, where the Quebec regular officers made everything as pleasant for their guests as it was possible for them to do. Telegraph and express messengers flocked there, and between the great fort at the top of the hill and the emigration shed there was a constant flow of soldier traffic. Companies were parading through the streets to the Citadel empty-handed and marching back with their issues of Lee-Enfield rifles and kits. At the sheds in the daytime the uniforms and outfits were served to the men. Groups rummaged through boxes of boots to get footwear to fit them, and ransacked the stacks of clothing, till at last all were supplied with black serge military clothing which fitted them fairly well.

Then came the last two nights, which were more exciting and hilarious than the first two. The men on the Saturday night, for the most part, held forth at the Drill Hall, where a grand smoking concert was given in their honor; the officers attended a dinner given for their benefit at the Citadel by the genial members of the Garrison Club.

CHAPTER V.

THE KEYNOTE SOUNDED.

ON the occasion of that dinner historic speeches were made, in keeping with the greatest military movement that Canada had ever seen. Lieut.-Col. White, the acting D. O. C. of Quebec, presided, and after those present had duly honored the toast of the Queen, and the health of His Excellency, Lieutenant-Governor Jette replied to the toast of the Lieutenant-Governor, stating that it was time for actions, not words. He was, he said, grateful to the Queen for the increase of liberty since she began to reign. Thankful he was that the contingent went with the entire approbation of all the people of Canada.

The health of Lieut.-Col. Otter and his officers was feelingly replied to by the Commandant of the Canadian Contingent.

To the toast of "The Army, Navy and Militia" the Hon. Dr. Borden (whose son, Lieut. Borden, has since been killed in South Africa) replied. Dr. Borden said that it was a fitting time to include the militia with the army and navy, for the soldiers from this country were going out to fight along with the Imperial forces for the first time in the history of Canada. "It is the proudest

incident of my life," said the Minister, "that I have been at the head of the Militia Department when such an important event is at hand. This is an epoch in the history of the Empire at large. It has been a long time coming, but at last the people of Canada have realized their responsibility and the debt they owe the Empire. Canada has thrown off her swaddling clothes and stands forth as a full-grown member of the family which makes up the Empire. We are now making history very fast in connection with this great Empire. Canada is not alone in sending assistance to the Mother country. Britain has become, not an Empire with a number of dependencies, but an Empire which is a collection of great nations, of which, perhaps, Canada is the leading one. It has been a process of development slow in the past, but rapid of late. We have been worried a great deal about the nature of the constitution whereby parts of the great Empire would form portions of the United Empire. This has been worked out just as the great British Constitution has been worked out, by process of development; just as the great British Constitution is unwritten, as this work is unwritten, and before we know it we find ourselves taking part in the wars of the Empire. We don't know exactly how it has come about, but somehow it has come about. I rejoice that this is a people's movement, not that of any government or any party; it emanates from the whole people of Canada, and it is being

endorsed by them, as shown by the words and deeds of the people at all points where the troops started from. For proof look at the bank accounts and the work of the noble women. No party or government can say that it has had more to do with this than other people. It is a popular movement, and this fact justifies the government in taking this action, and sending the contingent without calling on Parliament. I believe in constitutional government, that Parliament must govern the country,—but there is something superior to Parliament,—it is the people. The voice of the whole people of Canada is backing up the gallant thousand." The Minister then complimented the officers and companies going with the British army on service. He told how the troops had been mobilized and outfitted within fourteen days from the time that it was first known that Canada was to send her men to the front.

Major-General Hutton followed and said that he was greatly pleased to be present on such an historic occasion, and that he was proud to congratulate Lieut.-Col. Otter. The Major-General said that the Canadians were about to take part in a critical campaign. He had seen two campaigns, one of them against the very people who were being fought then,—the Boers. He had known their character and tenacity. He warned the officers that, though they had a great opportunity, they had a great responsibility. This was the greatest historic episode in the

history of Canada during the last quarter of a century. The men, he said, might think that they were going to see a new country, but they were really going with their lives in their hands, to fight. All the officers had been chosen on his recommendation, and he was sure that the best men in Canada had been secured, irrespective of party or creed. He had had great pleasure, in writing to General Buller, to tell him that we were sending from the shores of Canada, the best battalion that Canada could show, and so far as he knew the best Canadian soldier at their head. The General paid tributes also to the ability of Lieut.-Col. Buchan and Lieut.-Col. Pelletier, the latter, third in command, being the representative of the French Canadians. He also referred to the officers attached, who were peculiarly fitted to their several tasks, and the Major-General said that, in so far as it lay in his power, he would try to have them on the general staff in South Africa. He complimented Lieut.-Col. Lessard, Lieut.-Col. Drury, Capt. Forester and Major Cartwright, who were attached to the regiment for special duty. The General's closing words were, "It is the great disappointment of my life that I am not in South Africa."

These two important speeches were listened to with rapt attention, and since the conclusion of the Royal Canadian Regiment's campaign in South Africa the prophetic truth which lay in both of them may be plainly seen.

All people in Canada have been pained to hear

of the death on campaign of Hon. Dr. Borden's son with the Mounted Canadians, and pleased that Major-General Hutton received his heart's desire later, in being allowed to take part in the South African campaign, where the Colonial Mounted Infantry division under his command did such good work.

The next day, Sunday, there was more quiet, the men, according to their various religions, taking part in two church parades. An eloquent sermon was preached to the Protestants at the Episcopal Cathedral by Rev. F. G. Scott, while, for the Roman Catholic members of the contingent, Rev. Father O'Leary, the Roman Catholic Chaplain of the regiment, held Low Mass at the Basilica.

During the Sabbath afternoon Major-General Hutton addressed the officers at the Frontenac, after orders had been given that the "Sardinian" should sail on the morrow. The palatial hotel was crowded with military men and officers of the contingent, with curious sight-seers and friends who had come from all parts of Canada to bid good-bye to those who were leaving for the far off theatre of war. Scarce would it be possible to crowd into the corridors and parlors of any hotel a more representative gathering of the fair women and stalwart men of the broad Dominion.

Activity dominated the Citadel, where the Governor-General, Lord Minto, at night, gave a dinner to Lieut.-Col. Otter and his officers; and at the sheds where the men were, the keenest inter-

est was taken in all the last preparations prior to embarking on the transport. All night long, on the cold dock, where the troop-ship lay tethered at her moorings, officers and details of men were busily engaged in the loading of stores from the wharf to the ship, which was to be their home for weeks to come.

CHAPTER VI.

THE FIRST ON BOARD.

EARLY on the morning of the 30th of October two men of the Canadian permanent corps stepped briskly past the "Chien D'Or," and stood talking at the head of the long flight of public steps that lead from the lower twisting street to the one they had just come along. They knew Quebec perfectly, but still there was a certain hesitancy about their movements that one might have taken for an unacquaintance with the city. They rested their feet uneasily, looked up and down the street in a noticeably anxious manner, and, for at least five minutes, they tramped from corner to stair-landing and back again.

"No word at Mat's place?" the taller one spoke at last.

"Not a word," answered his companion, with a face absolutely devoid of expression, save for a scowl that played over it after he had spoken.

"Nor wasn't there no note left at the hang-out on the corner?"

"No note at all, but he'd been there late last night, and was weakenin' on the scheme," was the reply from the younger soldier, who was becoming more communicative.

"Well, I'm off swearin' to carry out a job with

him again. He know'd we was in earnest, and now he ain't playin' his part," came from the one who had spoken first, while he nodded his head emphatically and tapped the heel of his boot with a battered swagger-stick. "This here pledge ain't worth what it's written on." This, as he pulled a dirty piece of blue paper from his pocket, tapped it sharply as he held it out to his companion.

"We agree to go to South Africa with the contingent to-morrow, Monday, October 30th, or on such other day as the transport sails. Each of us having been rejected, we pledge ourselves to go if it is possible to get on the 'Sardinian.'"

"Meet just past 'Chien D'Or' to-morrow morning at 8 o'clock."

"Quebec, Oct. 29th, 1899."

The other one looked at the paper, which had been neatly and precisely made out, written by a hotel clerk the day before, and said, "Don't tear her up; she is worth two-thirds of what is there yet."

"In what way?" queried the pledge-holder.

"Ain't two names left outside of Jim's, and don't they go?"

"Yes, yours and mine is there if you're game. Are you for it?" and he looked intently into his companion's eyes.

"Sure!" was the laconic reply, and a vise-like hand clasp between the two was the second sealing of the pledge that the third man had proposed the day before and failed to keep.

Two soldiers stepped out towards the dock; and hours before the regiment had embarked two stowaways were safely ensconced on the "Sardinian."

'Twas a Quebec pledge that was broken, but still kept.

CHAPTER VII.

ON THE "SARDINIAN."

ON that same eventful Monday, the second last day of October, all preparations had been completed for the regiment to sail. What work there is in connection with the embarking of one thousand men, only those who have the work in hand can tell, though one may form a certain idea of the task by studiously watching the myriad of operations necessary before the stay-ropes of the ship are loosed and she is at last off. Piles of blankets to bale up, boxes of boots and uniforms to be looked after, men's kit-bags to be checked over, provisions for a thousand hungry men for a month to be packed, and so on through the long details. For officers totally unaccustomed to such work, nothing but praise can be given for the expeditious way they were able to discharge these duties.

Thousands and thousands of people were out on the morning the steamship sailed to see the Royal Canadian Regiment, set up, as they were, in their new uniforms of black serge and white helmets, and to watch them parade for inspection on the Esplanade. All residents and visitors were more than ever eager to have a glimpse

of the men before they started on their long sea voyage. Formed into a square, and kept waiting too long, till addresses and the like were read, the battalion was first inspected by Major-General Hutton, and then by the Governor-General, Lord Minto. Speaking to the men, the Governor-General complimented them on their appearance, and told them that Canada might justly feel proud of them. The words which Lord Minto spoke in addressing Lieut.-Col. Otter will long live in the minds of all who heard the Governor-General. He said: "The force you command represents a great deal more than a serviceable regiment on parade. We are standing here upon historic ground, under the ramparts of the old City of Quebec, surrounded by celebrated battlefields, and in an atmosphere full of glorious traditions of two great nations, who, respecting each other's warlike qualities on many a hard-fought field, have now joined hands in common loyalty to Queen and Empire. The people of Canada have shown no inclination to discuss the quibble of colonial responsibility, they have only unmistakably asked that their loyal offer should be made known, and they rejoice in its gracious acceptance. In so doing, surely we have opened a new chapter in the history of our Empire. They have freely made their military gift to an Imperial cause, to share its privations, and the dangers and the glories of an Imperial army. They have insisted on giving vent to the expression of that sentimental

Imperial unity which may, perhaps hereafter, prove more binding than any written Imperial Constitution. The embarkation of your force, Col. Otter, to-day, will mark a memorable epoch in the history of Canada and the Empire. Of the success of your force we have no doubt. We shall watch your departure with very full hearts, and will follow your movements with eager enthusiasm. All Canada will long to see the Maple Leaf well to the front, and to give to her contingent a glorious welcome home again. And now, as the representative of Her Majesty, I wish you God-speed and every success."

The Premier of the Dominion, the Right Hon. Sir Wilfrid Laurier, then addressed the men, and said they were going to obey the call of justice, humanity and civilization. He rejoiced to see the alacrity with which the Canadians had responded to the call, and rushed to the aid of a great Empire, of which all were so proud. They would, he felt sure, return with honor to themselves and to their native land.

A lengthy and loyal address was presented and read in French and English by the Mayor of Quebec, the Hon. S. N. Parent.

This concluded the last hour before the troops, marching to martial music, were headed to the Allans' wharf, and tramped with their heavy trappings on to the wooden and clattering decks of the transport "Sardinian." Tens of thousands, who had not been able to see the review, were thronged on the Citadel, on Dufferin Ter-

race, and crowded the walls along the city front. Men, women and children, fought for hours to try to gain an entrance to the docks, and even the strong military and police cordons were at times unable to cope with the crushing masses. As speedily as possible, after the last good-byes were said on the wharf, the companies had been allotted their places on the ship.

On the battlements of Quebec, Wolfe wrote the first pages of British history in Canada, and it seemed but natural, that, from out the shadow of the Ancient Capital, should sail away the First Canadian Contingent bound to fight for the flag which he had so bravely planted on the Plains of Abraham.

To many that hour of departure was a trying one, but yet the parting had to come. The sullen old rocks of the Citadel, crowded as they were with a surging mass of humanity, seemed to swell toward us and follow the heavily-laden troopship as she reluctantly slipped from her moorings at the dock, slid into the waters of the St. Lawrence and made for her gateway to the ocean. As the madly-wild enthusiasts and cheering multitude waved to the men on the "Sardinian" a fond farewell, and to some of the soldiers the last farewell they ever heard on earth, even the sun turned away his face, and darkness settled over the craft which had started to bear the Royal Canadians to South Africa.

Till dusk came, steam yachts and tugs, pleasure boats and barges, followed the Canadian

transport far down the river. Those on the escort boats cheered and rushed to the sides of their craft in wild anxiety to catch whatever souvenirs the departing soldiers had to part with. There was a craze for the soldiers' buttons, and when the supply of small tokens became exhausted, almost anything else was brought into requisition. Forage caps and sleeping toques, and even new suspenders, were quite in demand. The men's quarters were all in the forward part of the ship, and little could be seen of the masts or the rigging, where the soldiers had swarmed, as the pleasure boats turned slowly back, cheered to the echo, and left the Royal Canadian Regiment alone on the mighty deep.

Down into the depths of the ship's steel belly the men were first sent to be shown and allotted their sleeping quarters—and what a revelation!

First, on the deck below the promenade deck, were hundreds of hammocks slung over the tables where the men ate, and when the soldiers had taken refuge in these for the night, their heavy frames, with the sagging of the swinging bed, almost touched the boards beneath them where they dined three times a day. They were placed so close together, that when one man swung or turned in the night, he jabbed the men in the swaying meshes on each side of him. This was the "troop deck."

Deeper, and on a level with the hold, was the "berth deck." How it ever had the courage to call itself a "deck" I know not, for the truth is,

the whole compartment was below the level of the water on the hull, which was then twenty-four feet dipped down in the ocean. However, in the berth deck were arranged more, many more, sleeping compartments for the men. But these were all stationary in long rows, with narrow passages at the men's heads and feet, with scant room for one to walk down between. Here, with shallow partitions, the men lay side by side like eggs that are crated in pasteboard casings.

About a foot and a half from the floor the first tier of bunks was constructed, giving a man little more than room to crawl into his lodgings. Above him was built the next row of berths, some two feet from the iron ceiling and the heavy rings where the horses used to be slung when the "Sardinian" was formerly in use. The size of the bunks was six feet by two feet, and in each was placed a straw mattress, a tick, pillow, blankets, rifle, whatever the soldier ever wanted to keep for his own use without having it appropriated; and last, but not least, his own precious body was supposed to find a resting place among these other accoutrements. Whatever air ventilation was sent down to this black hole had to be conveyed by means of canvas air-chutes from the upper decks. As for the officers and non-commissioned officers, they had, according to rank, more commodious quarters.

This was the sleeping accommodation.

The fitting up of the ship, to have been done

in such a short time, was well seen to; of this there is no doubt, but she had too many on board. She would ordinarily have lent herself to the demands of five hundred soldiers—and she carried ten hundred and thirty-nine, besides a formidable ship's crew.

The tables where the men messed were long stationary affairs, with fixed backless bench seats on either side; and here, sparsely lighted by the port holes, and by whatever sun's rays could escape down the hatchways, the soldiers went three times a day to meals, from the second last day in October till the second last day in November. Not the semblance of a tablecloth was used, and at the time of disembarkation, after a month's constant spilling of soup and overturning of greasy meat and potatoes, those festive boards would have made splendid material for a huge bonfire with which to celebrate the end of the tiresome voyage.

The sergeants had a mess of their own at one long table which ran parallel to the separate berths allotted to them and almost within reach of where they slept. Their food was somewhat more extravagant than that of the privates, and they boasted of a tablecloth and water bottles constantly on the table. Some privates who were able to hold converse with the oracle, and who paid the price, were able, like Lazarus, to obtain something to eat at the Sergeants' mess door, and on a couple of occasions I have known a private to succeed in securing the whole course

of provisions at the sergeants' table after they were through. The sergeants also had a couple of hastily constructed bath rooms a few feet from the end of the dining table, which, when they were working properly, and the water was not scalding hot, proved a decidedly healthful addition to their quarters. Once, it was afterwards learned, Private "Banker," through constant perseverance and sheer recklessness, was able to indulge in the luxury of this bath after the regular hose-drenching on deck for the men had been discontinued.

The officers' mess was in the regular saloon of the ship, and when the dishes were not flying from one end of the table to the other, when the Major's fish was not jumping into the Colonel's coffee, they were enjoyable and well put on. The saloon was not large enough to accommodate all the officers at once, consequently there were two sittings—one for hot meals, and the next for meals that had been hot, but that had had all the enthusiasm cooled out of them.

One thing that was served equally to the officers, non-commissioned officers and men at meal time, without discrimination as to rank, was the rolling of the ship, which, as if it had some spite against all the soldiers, cut up her best pranks when the bugle and bell called them to the table. Then did the "Sardinian" stick her nose deeper into the briny billows and heave her propeller higher in the air.

The after part of the vessel was reserved for

the officers of the regiment; the sergeants had a small allotment of deck room just forward of this, and the men had the rest of the fore part of the ship where it was not taken up with bakers' quarters, cooks' galleys, shooting targets, old stationary hoisting machinery, wooden horse-stalls, carpenters' and armourers' shops, and other newly-added board structures. Though limited, the men made good use of their promenade deck. The ship was 425 feet long by about forty-six feet at her widest part, when she did her best rolling, and sent barrels tumbling down the hatchway, she seemed about twelve feet long with no width at all.

Most of the experiences of the campaign were new to the Royal Canadians, and that of being at sea was among the most novel. There was one young private who was having his first ocean voyage, and at the same time his own doubts as to whether or not the seaworthy old vessel would be able to carry us on the long slanting trip across the Atlantic. He was always early to bed, preferring his lowly berth to watching the high-rolling waves, as many others did, from the side of the ship at night.

When we had been two days and two nights at sea the captain had the ship lay to in order to escape the belt of a storm which was raging. With engines slacked down the vessel lay tossing like an uneasy sleeper, while some of this particular private's companions stood over the rail watching the turbulent billows shiver along the

whole length of the boat. Suddenly one of them turned around. "Where's D.?" he asked of the rest.

"In his bunk," the others answered in chorus.

"Let's get him up!" suggested the first speaker.

"You can't do it," replied his particular friend, "he's too much in love with the shelf he sleeps on."

"Well, I'll see if I can't. You go down below and get in your bunk just over his, and I'll be down in a minute. You can have my soup to-morrow if I don't get him out."

Bill went down to his six-by-two, and was soon apparently fast asleep, with Private D. in the bunk underneath. In a moment the man who planned the scheme plunged down the hatchway, waking two or three with the clatter of his heavy ammunition boots. He groped his way over to Bill's bed, turned on the light, at the same time giving a knowing wink to his companion.

"Well, Bill," he started in a half-tremulous, half-pathetic voice, "I guess the worst is bound to come. They say we're stuck."

"Nonsense," answered Bill; then, restraining an obstreperous laugh by biting his lower lip, went on: "Surely you must be mistaken; but—I know this is a bad coast."

"What's that?" and Private D.'s head, with eyes protruding, shot out into the aisle below.

"I tell you, Bill, she'll be on the rocks in ten minutes," the schemer continued, paying no

attention to Private D., who had by this time wriggled his shoulders into the open space between the berths.

"Well, pard," said Bill, "I'm ready to go, but I'll stay here and drown like a rat. Here's my hand, even if it is the last one I give you. Listen her bottom scraping. It's all over!"

There was a shuffling and bumping in Private D.'s narrow bed and a muffled, "Oh! My God! My God!!"

"There she goes!" the two mischief-makers cried together, as the grinding screw of the ship started up again, and the boat went forward with a lurch.

At the same instant Private D., with nothing but a shirt on, around which was securely fastened a dusty old life-preserver, shot out from the bottom bunk, and his long, skinny, bare white legs flashed up the hatchway, while he danced on to the cold decks houting, "Help! Murder!! Fire!!! Police!!!! Royal Canadians, forward! We're all drowned!! Man the lifeboats!!"

The hilarious reception he received when he crawled down the greasy stairway, alone and shivering, a few minutes after, was such as to keep fresh in his memory forever the "loss of the 'Sardinian.'"

After lights were out on the decks where the soldiers slept, there was always some miscreant who kept at least a section or two awake with his loud, idle gossip, when he himself did not wish to sleep; and at times some practical joker would

put the "C" Company's mascot dog "Walker," or the little brindle pup "Krüger," into a row of bunks to let the canines scamper over the faces of the tired volunteers.

Then there was a diminutive organ on board, the size of a regulation biscuit box—a pocket melodeon—and, in one of the larger alleyways, a certain enthusiastic set used to grind out their selections, generally ending with "For Those in Peril on the Sea." The mention of "peril on the sea" always had a disquieting influence on Private D., whose life-belt, after his ship-foundering scare, was always used as a pillow.

When the soldiers came on board at Quebec they were loaded with all kinds of cherished souvenirs. Whatever could not be carried around with them had to be left in the bunks; but it was not many days before most of the treasured tokens changed hands, for wholesale appropriation was carried on. Stealing was a crime, but petty larceny was an accomplishment which nearly every man had to cultivate in order to protect his own interests. The latter seems to be a faculty with soldiers the world over.

One poor fellow, who had been presented with a handsome fruit cake at Quebec, preserved it under his pillow for the first night, and then invited a dozen of his townsmen down to share the dainty luxury with him, "but when he got there the cupboard was bare." "Sorry, boys; I suppose it was the thirteen of us who brought the bad luck," said he.

"You would not have had a chance of a canary at a cat show if there had been only two of us," said the last man who was invited, rather savagely, as the well-meaning host led the way to the men's canteen, and in lieu of the cake bought half a pound of prunes and a shilling's worth of biscuits, which were eaten to the accompaniment of half a dozen bottles of amber-colored lemon soda.

The innocent ways of some were more than atoned for by the wily ways of others, and many of those who came on board unsophisticated, landed on the Dark Continent with ingenuity enough to look after their own welfare in all conceivable ways. Tricks that had been successfully played on them they tried on others. A lesson many a man there learned was to battle for himself,—and once learned it seldom is forgotten.

The North-West Corporal saw the Private first. The bakers' galley was steaming with the welcome smell of fresh-made bread and buns, and at a door farther forward the cooks' great brass caldrons sent forth the smell of boiling meat on the first afternoon from Quebec. There had been nothing to eat since the tiresome parade and review and this was the first place of meeting of the North-West Corporal and the Banker Private.

"Where's Private Banker?" the Corporal shouted, as he tripped in the hazy light, over the hot-air pipe at the head of a hatchway, and jammed his side arm into the calf of his leg.

"Here, Corporal!" the Private answered, "I am trying to buy some buns. What's wanted?"

"Buns be confounded!" growled the Corporal, as he made a grimace and rubbed an injured shin, "you get down to that bunk of yours and get your kit and arms piled into your cot—no time for eating."

The Private, abashed, slipped down to his berth, while the hunger still gnawed at his belt. When well out of sight the Corporal slunk over to the cookhouse and beamed on the chef most kindly. "A couple of slices of beef, old chap; our sergeant's too busy for grub."

"Your sergeants don't eat with you," answered the cook, who was an old army man, and could tell the difference in rank between the two stripes on the Corporal's arm and the three or four worn by sergeants.

"Well, in that case," answered the Corporal, as he secured the needed extra, "I'll arrest these pieces of meat and take them to the guardhouse." And the extra meal the Corporal got the Private never knew of.

CHAPTER VIII.

A BURIAL AT SEA.

A COLD, black ocean, a dull, gloomy day; a popular man of the regiment dead—a burial at sea. Who of the Royal Canadians would wish to live that fourth day on the transport over again? Where is the man of the thousand whose spirit was not darkened when the first death in the battalion was announced?

All night long the unconscious sufferer had been fast failing; at early dawn death released him from all thought of peace or battle.

On the aft port side of the ship the men of the regiment stood that afternoon with heads bared and bent in solemn reverence. The Colonel and his staff stepped quietly to the front of the lines drawn up on the heaving deck, which rested not quietly even for the impressive service for the dead. The Chaplain passed noiselessly down through the human aisle of black uniformed men and took his place at the rail of the ship, wet with the sea spray which drizzled over that congregation of heavy-hearted soldiers. From his resting place below four stalwart friends carried the cold body of their dead companion-in-arms up the narrow hatchway, and with steps slow

and sad placed it half-way across the ship's rail. Meantime the impressive service went on, each man staring steadfastly in front of him out on the bleak rolling billows of the ocean where was to be the boundless resting place of the departed soldier. The eyes of the men were glazed with the tears which spoke silently from their swollen hearts, and their throats burned and choked as they looked for the last time on the outstretched form of their silent comrade sewn in his canvas covering, lying reverently covered in the flag he had started to fight for.

That dismal burial duty was a pause in the day's occupation which we prayed God would come not again.

It was too depressing to be long drawn out; it was too impressive to be ever forgotten—that burial at sea.

Strong hands raised the stiffened soldier as the Union Jack was lifted from his bier of rough-hewn boards, slowly the body slid from its temporary resting place, the ocean gurgled, and the mighty sea had claimed the first of the Royal Canadians.

The funeral of Edward DesLaurier was the saddest on campaign.

CHAPTER IX.

INTO THE SOUTHERN SEAS.

WE had experienced the cold of the Atlantic for a short time around the coast of Newfoundland, we had but timidly tasted the raging storms of the great ocean, and as our ship sailed south we began to encounter the warm weather of the Torrid zone and tropics.

Soon after our departure we dipped into the tepid and then warm waters of that "river in the ocean," the Gulf Stream, where the bright indigo waters seemed to have absorbed their color from the cloudless sky overhead, and where eternal summer rules the well-dyed waves.

Thanks to the waters of the Gulf Stream, the men were able to indulge in the luxury of a splendid bath each morning during all the time we sailed on its warm and enticing depths. A hard-worked pump and a generous hose played a stream of water on the laughing, dancing soldiers as they huddled together on the bow of the ship each morning at sunrise.

Companies were ordered for bath parade on different mornings, but since there was no distinguishing badge to discriminate one company's members from those of another when they were

ready for the plunge, there was many a man who appeared under the refreshing stream when his company had not been bidden to bathe. This was one of the few occasions when the soldiers got more than had been allotted to them. However, if some had more than their share of baths on the boat, they made ample recompense for it in the after months on the veldt, when water was worth its weight in gold. What would those men have given for a "tub" at Jacobsdahl? What would they not have sacrificed for a dip at Poplar Grove Drift, after their wearying foodless marches in the dust-clinging sand? And what would a general wash have been worth at Boemplatz, before the battle of Zand River? Only those who were there can tell what a consolation it is to get away for an hour from greasy, rotting kharki suits and shirts that have seen continuous service for months, night and day, to free one's self from vermin-dipped blankets and an insect-creeping tent. Then does the occupation of a washerwoman loom up in all its true dignity, and she appears to the sullen, sand-stained soldier, to possess the most delightful occupation of all mankind.

The ploughing prow of our vessel at last furrowed her way through the Gulf Stream, and once more we were in water too cold for contact with the men's skins.

Whales, with their spouting artesian wells, had attracted our men already on the voyage; porpoises, racing at the fore part of the ship like

thoroughbred hunters taking the jumps, had given them many an hour's amusement; and even sharks, had given them very serious moments of contemplation; but the sight of land, such as it was, was the greatest novelty seen after we had been fifteen days at sea. The curious antics of the flying-fish had interested the soldiers as this sea-urchin would dart from the water and fly fifty yards, encroaching on the birds' world, and again dip down to hold communion with his associates of the deep. "Mother Carey's chickens" had been the objects of surprise as they fluttered around the masts and rigging of the ship—but they were not land!

Early on the hazy Sunday morning of November 13th word came that land was in sight, and five o'clock saw the bunks cleared, and an interested lot of soldiers scanning the heights of San Antonio, the first of the Cape Verde Islands that we sighted. Cold, craggy rocks pushed their stern peaks thousands of feet through the deep ocean, lighted in peculiar, bulging patches as the sun came out and shone on what is there called land.

As we came closer, a few humble huts could be discerned at the base of the island—that is all —but imaginative members of the contingent were able to see goats browsing on the barren sides of the great hills. Some saw men playing golf on the flat parts of the island, while others noticed elephants and hippopotami strolling quietly together. A few of the Royal Canadians

caught a glimpse of some people going to church, another group of volunteers caught sight of the bill boards of an opera troupe. What was not seen in that great hippodrome by at least some one man, would be, indeed, hard to imagine.

Then we steamed slowly past the west of the second island in the group, St. Vincent, a counterpart of its sister island, save that the latter affords a good harbor. We had no bill of health, and we could not stop. We signalled that we were the Canadians out Boer-hunting, and that we all felt well. The little signal station at St. Vincent flashed back a message, but the deciphering of it never eventuated. The great mountains of the island scowl down on this coaling village, and the village peeps out timidly on the sea, as if quivering lest some day those towering masses will fall and blot out St. Vincent forever.

Passing the mouth of the quiet little harbor, we could see transports and cruisers lying at ease, giving us a cheer, the sound of which never reached us,—and in half an hour we were out on our lonely journey again, glad of the break in the monotony of the weary ocean waste.

We were soon to rush over—whether the boat would bump or not—the line we had learned of in our public school days, which stretches itself around the circle of the globe and divides the Northern from the Southern hemisphere of the earth.

In the wooden structure known as the vegetable house on the promenade deck, clad in old

force to give the men of the Dominion a welcome which time cannot efface from their memories.

One might justly be proud of that thousand who wore the maple leaf on the morning of disembarkation, for truly they conducted themselves in the most soldierly manner. With heads up, eyes straight in front of them, with shoulders well thrown back, they tramped with a steady swing, through their line of march, never looking to the right or left, till out over the winding and dusty road they came to their camping ground overlooking the ocean on the common at Green Point. It was a beautiful spot for soldiers, and a welcome change from the rocking decks of a troop-ship.

The Canadian contingent pitched their tents, and got for themselves the first meal they had had together in any camp. Those who had no kharki tunics were supplied with the English article, which, by the way, was neater in appearance and more serviceable than the sand-colored goods sent from Canada. New boots of English manufacture were also issued to those who needed them, while the whole regiment was radiant with a murderous looking clasp-knife, tied securely to the end of a stout lanyard. What service this needy article was to the men in after days is inestimable, since it combined to make a knife, a fork, and a spoon, for all the soldiers of the army on campaign. The large, sharp blade, took the place of an ordinary table knife, its width gave it the luxury of a spoon, and the

trusty marlin-spike at the opposite end was brought into requisition instead of a fork, while it would even have served, if occasion demanded, as a bayonet.

There was a small store not far from the camp ground, much after the style of the general store found in all Canadian hamlets, and its attractiveness soon tempted the Canadian volunteers.

Private Banker had not overlooked it on the dusty march to Green Point, and wondered what the Dutch sign, "Algemeene Handelaar," in white letters, meant, placed boldly over the door. On the first chance he had of quietly walking through the lines, he took advantage of it, making straight for the shop which had interested him.

Half-way from the camp he met his old friend of the cookhouse, the North-West Corporal.

"Where are you going?" questioned the Corporal, as he slipped into his pocket a bulky tin of sardines.

"Going to 'procure,'" and the Private pointed to the store, with a wistful look in his eyes.

"Well, there is no time for the store," said the Corporal, "the Sergeant wants all the men to unpack blankets, and you're included."

The Private turned and the two walked back together. He thought he knew what was in the Corporal's pocket, but all the shifting he could do from one side of that greedy worthy to the other, could not assure him of his convictions. Not many words had been spoken till the inquisitive

Private asked, "What have you got in your pocket, Corporal?"

"Oh, just some oil to take the rust out of the rifles; they're kind of dirty from the sea air," and he looked at the other with such a sober air that the Private was convinced of the truth of the statement.

That night Private Banker, late in getting out on pass, poked his head into the Corporal's tent, where there was a light.

"Coming into town?" he asked.

There was no reply, as the lonely Non-com. sat devouring the last of the greasy fish, with the lie spread wide on his face.

"I beg your pardon," apologized the Private, as he backed out, "I did not know you were oiling your rifle or I should not have interrupted you."

There was a sickly attempt on the part of the Corporal to smile, but even that feeble effort failed, and the two, one deceitful, the other open-hearted, parted in silence.

"Every dog has his day," thought the good-natured Private, as he joined a party ready for the town, "and mine will come yet."

The jolly party were not long in finding their way down town, and for the first time in more than four weeks, they enjoyed a couple of hours of freedom, away from the duties of night-watch and parade.

CHAPTER XI.

A NIGHT OFF AND A MEAL.

THAT first night off the boat for the Royal Canadian Regiment was one long to be remembered. Pleased in the extreme were they all to get their sea-legs off and their land-legs on once more, and, to make the short epoch more enjoyable, passes from camp were given with an ungrudging hand, so that those who wished might saunter down the streets of Cape Town and see the inner workings of an African city.

The liberal Canadian money-spenders were soon in evidence all over the town, treating themselves to a good time, the meaning of which on land they had almost forgotten, though I admit the idea soon came back to them, and they seemed not to have forgotten any of the essential points therein.

They were treated loyally and royally by members of the Imperial regiments who chanced to meet them, and who showed them the sights of the capital in so far as it lay in their power. As may be imagined, what might be called almost a raid, was made on the restaurants and cafés. It was a repetition of the Quebec experi-

ence, though waged with more vehemence, for, after an ocean voyage of 7,000 miles, appetites are much keener than they are after a couple of days' train journey.

Helmets with maple leaves attached that were hung on the hat racks in certain popular restaurants at eight o'clock were not taken down till two hours later, when the Canadians, smiling almost as blandly as an Englishman after an excellent meal, sauntered forth to see what else was good in Cape Town.

Private D. was a happy volunteer that night, since the rolling of ocean waves was not to interrupt his otherwise peaceful sleep in the least. He was also, in the jubilation of the hour, very unsuspecting. He, with a companion, was one of the very few who did not eat first of all after getting to the city. He was rather "concert hall" inclined, and was bent on seeing "a show."

The two peeped into the Grand Opera House —that was too dressy; they visited a promenade concert hall—that was too slow; they told their troubles to a cab-driver, and he poured balm on their troubled heads, charged them ten shillings for the ointment, and threw in a drive to a "bowery" concert hall where short-skirted dancers were holding forth. They smiled, were suited, and took a good seat.

After the performance the two strolled down past the "Peek Inn," a short distance away. Two doors past the saloon a bland and suave man in shirt sleeves saw them coming as he stood in the doorway of a well-lighted restaurant.

"Good-night, boys!" said the agreeable gentleman; "been to the show?"

"Yes, sir," they answered simultaneously and with some effusion.

"Well!" ejaculated the proprietor with marked surprise, "Don't you boys know yet that every person who has been in there gets a meal here, too?"

The raw volunteers did not take long to grasp the meaning of such a sentence. They looked at each other and winked, unseen by the café man.

"Guess we're pretty lucky," whispered Private D., "good job we didn't eat before or we'd have missed the free lunch."

"Rather," his friend pompously affirmed as the two seated themselves in true aldermanic style at the end of a row of unoccupied tables.

"No person else in here," remarked Private D.'s friend.

"No, but all the theatre people will soon be along, when they all have a meal thrown in."

No waiter being in sight, the proprietor left the door and attended to his two Canadian guests himself.

"Beefsteak and onions, twice?" queried the smiling gentleman, with a genteel nod of his head.

"Right you are," spoke up Private D., who had already acquired one English phrase, which he was using on all convenient and conspicuous occasions.

"Now, do you gentlemen care for some dessert?"

asked the man of the place in his mildest terms. "Sometimes," he went on, interesting them, "the theatre-goers who have the privilege of taking a meal here, don't care for dessert and some do—and ah! by the way gentlemen, you have not shown me your reserved seat coupons, though I trusted your word that you had been in the theatre." The Canadians were able to show, with the greatest of felicity, their ticket stubs.

"Thank you gentlemen," said the proprietor with the politeness of a polished Frenchman. "Now, your dessert order."

They gave it and finished the meal.

Both young soldiers went to the proprietor and shook him heartily by the hand, and each presented him with a maple leaf, the Canadian Contingent's emblem.

"Thank you, gentlemen, very much," the proprietor said humbly, as the soldiers settled themselves for a chat with him.

"I don't see," broke out Private D., "how they can afford to throw in such a splendid meal with a two shilling opera ticket. I enjoyed it immensely."

"Nor do I," joined his friend.

"We don't either," the proprietor answered, changing his tone. "Five shillings each please, and—a shilling extra for the dessert. This is no charity dining-hall."

The twelve shillings were paid and the convivial conversation at once came to an end. Instead of driving back to camp in a hansom as had been

agreed, the two, financially embarrassed, walked to the Green Point Common.

Long after lights were out in their tent, and hours after the others were asleep, Private D. turned over to his friend and whispered, "Every person who has been to the show gets a meal here."

"Yes," said his friend seriously, reflecting on the price he had to pay for it, "and the rottenest meal I ever tasted."

CHAPTER XII.

OFF TO THE FIRST CAMP.

TIRED soldiers who had prowled around Cape Town the night before, yawned like lazy young cubs as they stretched their arms and fists almost into one another's faces when *reveille* sounded at Green Point on Friday, the first day of December. They had not been used to such privileged delectation, and the energy they had displayed in finding the points of interest in the colony's capital had left not a few uneager to raise their weary backs from their sandy beds when the bugle blared the call to rise.

Wild rumours flew through the camp on eagle wings, to a hundred different effects. According to these incoherent stories the Royal Canadians were to be at once brigaded with the Black Watch; they were to at once garrison several important places betwen Cape Town and Kimberley; they were to be in action in two days; they were to do almost everything imaginable, but march immediately on Pretoria and occupy it. As a matter of fact no person knew definitely what they were to do, nor did those in command know from day to day during the campaign what was the next step. War is a worse place than a

quilting-bee or a ladies' aid society for gossip and fictitious yarns.

Orders had been received, however, which stated that the Canadian regiment was to entrain that day for some place up the north country, and the men on parade that morning were given this reliable information, and were told to make all necessary arrangements. With all these vapor stories diffusing in the men's minds there was great expectation among them as they started to put in order whatever earthly belongings they were allowed to take forward with them.

Of course all these unreliable reports contained as much truth, on examination, as a sieve does water. The best way for a soldier to form an opinion as to his future movements is to wait and see.

The glad tidings of an immediate move lightened the work of preparation for it, and by half-past one in the afternoon the kharki-clad Canadians were ready to start for the Cape Government railway station to entrain for their journey.

The reception they received on the line of march was even more vociferous than the grand welcome they had been given on disembarking and marching to the Green Point Common the day before. It was the warmest tribute to the volunteers from our Dominion which the loyal citizens of the colony of the Cape of Good Hope could give.

That Canadians may know the proud send-off that their sons received on that great day, no

better reference can be given than the account of the ovation which appeared in the Cape *Times*, the largest and best publication in Cape Town, or for that matter, in Africa. Written by their own men, the description can be said to be neither tainted with the touch of a partial pen, nor even shadowed with the suggestion of any Canadian.

In this connection the Cape Town *Times* said :—

"The Cape Town railway station was yesterday the focus of popular interest, for between ten o'clock in the morning and half-past three in the afternoon the Australian Contingent (mounted and foot) and the Canadian Volunteers entrained for the north. They had a royal send-off, in spite of the probably innocent game of spoof played by the military authorities and the town-house. There were three distinct departures during the day—the Australian Infantry, the Canadian Rifles, and the Australian Mounted Detachment—and official notice had been given in terms indicative of the respective times of departure, being 11 a.m., 2.20 p.m., and 4.20 p.m. As a matter of fact the first contingent was in the railway station before 10 a.m., the Canadians were another hour ahead of schedule time and the mounted men from Maitland had been standing waiting in the goods yard a good hour before their notified time of passing through the streets. No doubt there were the best of reasons for this putting forward of the clock; they were not clear on the surface to the ordinary citizen,

who wanted to show his enthusiasm and admiration for his brother colonists' gritty loyalty. Neither were they appreciated by the hundreds and hundreds of ladies and children who stood patiently in the streets after the contingents had gone by, and wondered when the troops would pass. Cheers rolled upward from the massed thousands, shot with cries of 'Good old Victoria!' 'Come back safe, boys!' 'Give it 'em warm!' and other shouts in which overcharged hearts find the alternative to hysterical displays of emotion. So it was with the Canadians' progress through the city. Surely never before did such a gigantic throng of people gather in the streets; they began in thin fringes at Bree street, and ended in immovable masses of men and women in Adderley Street, from Parliament House to the station—immovable only as far as change of place goes. Packed in rows on footpath and roadway, they greeted the men off to the front with volley after volley of cheers, waved hats, handkerchiefs, sunshades, hands. Not a soul was silent, but each vied with the other in giving voice to the admiration and half-sorrowful regard they felt for the gallant sons of the 'Lady of the Snows' going light-heartedly to grapple with those who would dare assail the old lion. It is no stretch of language to say that the city was moved as it never before was stirred, and the troops caught the contagion. It was thus that all the loyal people of Cape Town acted, and those from Britain's fair Dominion felt that

it was one of the proudest moments of their lives, and a send-off such as had not been dreamed of."

When the Canadian Contingent was about ready to depart, His Excellency, Sir Alfred Milner, the Governor-General of the Colony, drove to the station and held a levee at the steps of our cars. He was accompanied by Mr. T. Ball, Mayor, and Mr. C. J. Byworth, the City Clerk. All the gentlemen wished the soldiers of Canada a pleasant trip and a happy and speedy return, and heartily congratulated Col. Otter and his staff on the fine appearance of the men, and their pluck and loyalty in taking a practical hand in the fortunes of the Mother Country.

The regiment entrained quietly and in an orderly manner, and at once the kind ladies of the city began to distribute luxuries through the windows to the men, who were packed, though not uncomfortably, into the second and third class carriages. Sandwiches, tobacco and canvas water-bags, were the principal gifts presented to a battalion, which showed a hearty appreciation of the citizens' thoughtfulness at such a time.

The massed multitude sent up a hearty "Good-bye," and "God bless you."

At the same time the Boers were bidding their fighters the same parting tributes as they left for the front from Pretoria. Right was apparently on both soldiers' sides. They met half way between the two starting points, and settled the dispute at Paardeberg.

Sir Alfred Milner, the Governor-General of Cape Colony, stood on the platform as the two Canadian trains pulled out, and his last words were to wish the men God-speed and a quick return.

First started the carriages containing the right half battalion and their officers, "E," "F," "G" and "H" companies; and after them the western men and officers of "A," "B," "C" and "D" companies were sent away.

At last the Canadians had started, and, as the train made good time up the single track line of the Cape Government railway, with its many switches and curves, there were new sights and new ideas for the soldiers.

After they had minutely examined the interior fixings of the cars, and had learned the use of all the peculiar devices in connection with them, they turned their active attention to viewing the country. Every available window accommodated two or three close-cropped Canadian heads, eagerly peering out on the landscapes new to them.

The engines puffed and grunted up the steep grade of the Karroo desert, and vomited out their black smoke till the air was thick with cinders.

Out to the north of the capital the railway passes through some of the best grain-growing and grazing country in the Colony. This was told the men, and they believed it. It was true, but no ocular demonstration of the fact presented

itself. Compared with any part of Canada it was a desolate country, with no sign of life save the huts of the black people, built here and there along the railway, where plenteous families eked out an existence on apparently nothing, their sole occupation seeming to be to dart from their low-built dwellings, half a dozen in succession, and cheer frantically as the train dashed past.

"How do they live?" asked Private D. after long reflection and continued study of their barren surroundings.

"On free meals after the opera, I suppose," said his friend of the night before, who sat beside him, with no small degree of irony; and the discussion of the question came to an abrupt end.

There was one grand sight on the way up—as there was during nearly every night of the campaign—and that was the glorious and attractive sunset. Could an artist paint one of those most wonderful scenes in South Africa, and present it to people who had never been bewildered by the actual sight, they would not believe that the painter had not had some flight of fancy far from the reality of his work. The train had not yet travelled through the actual kopje country, so that there was a plain desert over which to watch that first wonderful fading of the sun.

Were a whole chapter to be devoted to an African sunset, it would not suffice, and were a volume written to describe this, God's picture of heaven in the sky, the words would be woefully

wanting when compared with those few last moments of light on the Dark Continent.

There was a fair blue sky overhead, with here and there a breathless, fleecy cloud, hanging timidly from the dome of the universe. Near the horizon, banked, as if preparing for conflict, more vaporous shapes edged close together ready for attack, and then, seemingly by signal, the sun, blood-red, rushed in behind them and flashed through his unstable enemy a million golden spears, broken at times where they met too strong a foeman, but shattering others in their ruddy glare and dispersing them. Then, as a huge showman with his heavenly views, he metamorphosed his slain obstructionists, and laughed as he poured on them his kaleidoscopic light. Tall forests grew up in the clouds, and even the wind seemed to shake the towering branches as they dulled and faded in the sky. Silver lakes, purple islands and golden streams were pictured in that magnificent changing panorama above the horizon, living for a moment, and then giving way to wonderful cold, grey castles, with bright-tipped turrets, guarded by terrible black giants as the sun turned his light from the paling palaces. Lightning clefts in the ruins of these phantom pictures showed the last warm, red tints of the evening. Then the reds raced into purples, and the purples plunged to greys. The gilded, glittering, dancing ocean of sand, between the spectator and the sun, rushed back to its mighty source in the west, and rolled abundantly

clothes, two stoutly built chaps sat crouched on opposite sides of a pail of dirty water facing each other. They had already learned to be very dexterous in the use of the sharp clasp-knives which each held in his hand—dexterous in the art of peeling potatoes. This was their employment, and had been ever since their presence on board had been made known officially. They were able to scalp off the thin coating of that staple with a remarkable rapidity that only comes to one who has had constant practice. In this respect these two apparently happy exiles from the ranks of the Royal Canadians were master hands.

They were the stowaways.

"What's all this I hear about this confounded 'line' they're all rantin' about," asked the shorter scullion, as he whisked the dirt from his blade on to his blue jeans.

"Oh! it's a big line in the ocean that's lyin' around here some place, that they're bettin' the ship'll go over about noon to-morrow. Lots of them tenderfeet has been havin' their eyes standin' out like knobs on a hat-rack lookin' for it to-day," replied the other kitchen-helper with a tone of disgust, especially as he emitted the last sentence.

"I suppose them bank dudes and counter-hoppers with the kidney feet wants it all when we come to it. No chance for Reg'lars like us. How'd you like to git a piece of it when we strike her?" asked the one of low stature.

"Fine!" answered the other of the Quebec pledge-sworn friends.

Final plans were arranged in whispered tones, whereby the two were to become possessors of a bit of the line. The next morning (November 17th), as we scudded past the Equator, 4,313 miles from Quebec, at 10.27½ o'clock, and at 13 degrees 45 minutes west longitude, amid the blowing of whistles and the discharge of a large rocket from the Captain's bridge, the two stowaways were eagerly peering from a hole at the side of the ship.

"Pull! I noticed her bump!" yelled the stubby soldier, excitedly.

"We've got as much of it as anyone, I'll bet," said the other in ecstacy, as they both hauled at the rope with a large iron meat hook attached, which they had been trailing through a crevice in the wall of the vegetable-house for half an hour; and they jerked through the hole a pair of discarded artillery trousers, which some private had thrown through a port hole at the critical moment, and which when sinking had caught on the pledgers' hook.

"Not a bad line if we had two pair," said the lanky Equator-snatcher.

"No," the other agreed, "might be able to join the artillery at Cape Town. I'm gettin' tired of infantry."

"What's the best you can do for dinner?" the cook yelled in from the galley.

"Pants!" answered one of the snickering

stowaways, and the cook was not able to see the significance of the answer till the wet trousers were sent to the kitchen in a pail in place of the potatoes which should have been peeled while the miscreants were waiting to catch the line.

Cool weather, like a Canadian October day, greeted the soldiers at the Equator, much to their surprise, but both before and after we had reached this point, midway between the north and south poles, it was hot enough to warm all flagging spirits, and both officers and men made a practice of sleeping on deck. The officers slung hammocks on the aft part of the ship, and the men slung blankets forward. The first were slung to the rafters overhead, the latter were slung on the deck wherever there was sufficient space for a human form to couch itself.

All eyes used to scan the horizon for the welcome sight of a passing vessel, and when "Ship ahoy!" sounded through the ranks, there were interested crowds to watch the passing stranger till it vanished from view.

When the contingent had been two weeks and two days at sea we passed the SS. "Rangatira," of the Shaw, Savill Albion line on her way from New Zealand to London. To us she proved a post-box in the ocean, for it was by her that we were able to send the first letters home from the "Sardinian." All night long some officers had watched for the light of a vessel, and from the Captain's bridge it was nearly dawn before a faint sparkling spectre appeared on the horizon

Two on board our boat had made a wager the night before that a vessel would come in view before twelve o'clock the next day.

"What shall we bet?" asked an officer of high rank, who gambled that no vessel would be seen.

"Champagne," answered the other, "if it suits you."

"Right," was the one word from this high officer's lips—for he was one of the six Colonels on board—as they sealed the compact.

The "Rangatira" stopped her engines, and the "Sardinian" halted, too. A life-boat was lowered from our ship, and after having put over to the England-bound boat with the great pillow-slips full of letters, and bringing back copies of the Cape Town papers, we both steamed on, glad to have had a handshake from a British sister ship.

"Well, boys, I've lost!" said the sporty Colonel, "and I'm willing to pay. Come along down stairs!"

Seven followers of Bacchus, besides the winner of the wager, changed their allegiance and followed the Colonel to the saloon.

The nine officers sat, eight with eager eyes, around the table, and slapped the good-hearted Colonel on the back, and each in turn told him what a good fellow he was.

"You must expect to lose sometimes, Colonel," ventured a young subaltern.

"Oh, yes; can't expect to win always," patronizingly, as he stuck out his chest and rubbed his hands.

The steward appeared in due time—very due time.

"Your order, sir?" came from the servant in the spotless duck uniform.

"I've just lost a bet to —— and I want these boys to join us," the Colonel said in a big-hearted way. "Bring in a pint of good champagne."

Eight heads dropped involuntarily, and some of those around the board had enough presence of mind to cough, while others groped for their watches, and became deeply interested with their brass buttons.

It was the last "sporty" bet that Colonel is known to have made on board.

It was the original intention to sail *via* St. Helena, the former stamping ground of the great Napoleon, and the French Canadians especially looked forward to seeing this historic spot. The Captain, however, decided otherwise, and to save time we cut off seventy miles of a "fiddler's elbow," as he termed it, by not calling there. Instead of steaming over two sides of a triangle to call there we took a direct line, and left that visit for those of the men who later returned from the campaign on the "Idaho."

On board the transport going out a degree of perfection in drill and discipline was reached which had scarcely been hoped for, but as in every other successful undertaking, it was not attained without steady perseverance and persistent practice.

At the Morris tube ranges on the bow of the

ship, Captain Bell, Scots' Guards, put the members of the regiment through a consistent course with the rifle, with the creditable result that one company—the Ottawa and Kingston Company—had an average of 35.1 out of a possible 40 points, and these Capital shots were closely followed by the Toronto Company, with an average of 34.96. This part of the efficiency of the Royal Canadian Regiment was later felt by Cronje's men when the Canadians came into the firing line at Paardeberg.

The appearance of the men on parade was good, and especially did they look well when they appeared in the kharki issue of clothing which was given to them as we neared Cape Town. There had been sent hundreds of pairs of trousers more than were required, while there was a woeful dearth of kharki tunics. This necessitated two companies landing in their rifle uniforms, and owing to this bungle on some person's part, the regiment looked rather "hit and miss" as they paraded the capital of the colony the day they disembarked.

Drill on the ship was often, if not generally, attended with difficulty, for the constant prancing and rearing of the boat gave corresponding gestures to the men, as they stood in line along the decks, though under the circumstances they did well.

Owing to ill-advised packing of things in the hold there was a lot of stuff sent by the Canadian people for use on the boat, which the soldiers never saw.

Though the men of the battalion needed lots of athletic exercise, the outfit sent for this purpose never saw the light; and when the regiment left Cape Town for the front, tobacco, which the men had at times longed for on the boat, had to be left behind to the extent of two tons. These were mistakes of which more might be cited, but it is too late to atone for them now, and, at the time, there was no person over-anxious to be responsible for them, nor for others which deprived the soldiers of what they might otherwise have had. When it was found that cigarettes, which Canadian tobacco firms had kindly sent as presents for the men, were being sold to them at the canteen, those in authority decided that this was going slightly too far, and an investigation was held. However, for Canada's initial venture at sending troops on a transport, all things considered, they got through as well as might be expected.

The health of the men was excellent, and but for a few slight accidents befalling some on board before the regiment reached its destination, every soldier was ready to step off on the word.

A word of thanks is, indeed, forthcoming to Captain Todd, Dublin Fusiliers, who accompanied the Canadian battalion on the way to Africa to join his regiment. He was appointed quartermaster for ship's duties, and it was due to his experience on transports and to the many suggestions he made that the "Sardinian" was kept in as clean and healthful a state as it was. When his ideas had been stated and carried out

there was a transformation in the condition of the vessel.

Lieut.-Col. Sam Hughes, who was also on board, made many a common-sense suggestion, which facilitated the care of the troops.

In all, they were a happy lot of men, and I doubt if another thousand could be got together who could get on with one another more congenially than did the soldiers of the Royal Canadian Regiment. There was less disintegration among the men than there was among others. It was seldom one could see a man trying to supplant another, and practically doing his best to take away whatever standing he had, or, in plainer words, "endeavoring to knock the other man's feet from under him." This cannot be said of all other cases or ranks of the regiment.

The ship was really a busy little village all the time—soldiers sharpening bayonets (so that, as one man said, if they ever got joking with the Boers when these sidearms were fixed, the Dutchmen "would not be able to see the point"), men lounging on the bare decks, some writing letters, playing cards, reading, singing, talking and discussing the war—all like one multitudinous family—a grand miniature army of as brave fellows as ever donned a uniform.

At length and at last the breaking up of this, what seemed to be a gigantic house party, had to come, and long to be remembered was the day when we were met by an embassy of sea gulls and escorted slowly into the glassy, swelling waters of Table Bay.

Like a dog that had been bounding and scampering, and had then come into the august presence of some quiet canines, the "Sardinian" glided in with the grace of a vessel that could not be ill-behaved, and stood timidly quiet in the midst of a myriad of other transports.

As we tiptoed our way towards the long, low, barren-looking shores, past the Lepers' Home on Robin's Island, and within touch, it seemed, of the lazy lion's head on the top of Table Mountain, the sailors at the capstan let our grating chains go down, and our anchor at the bottom held us fast.

First of all we hoisted a yellow flag as a signal for a medical officer to come on board.

The two chums of the city regiment were standing, as usual together, on the bow of the boat.

"What's the yellow flag up for?" the younger one asked somewhat concernedly.

"Trouble in China, I guess," replied his companion in a half-dazed mood.

"No; I heard some person say something about a medical officer, I suppose we're stuck with yellow fever," the junior Private went on. Private D., of life-belt fame, overheard the last remark and joined the conversation.

"Stuck!" said he. "Oh! I was afraid of this. My God! surely we can get help?" and he hastily slipped down to inspect his cork preserver, which had scarcely been out of his sight during all the voyage.

CHAPTER X.

ON LAND AT CAPE TOWN.

WHEN we had passed medical inspection and given a healthful passport, a civic and military deputation came out to our ship and welcomed Lieut.-Col. Otter and his regiment. Those deputed to receive the battalion at the ship told all the latest war news, and in a short time the Canadians were made aware of the state of the conflict—a state whereat they were much surprised; but glad they were to know that there was still the chance which most of them had hoped for.

After all the "how do you do's" and "thank you's" had been said, the Commandant of the Canadians, together with Major Drummond and Capt. Todd (Dublin Fusiliers), left for the shore on the wide, flat-bottomed steam launch in which the deputation had come to us.

Shortly after, our resting transport weighed anchor and edged into the inner harbor, where the Canadians were given a royal welcome and a warm reception by the soldiers and sailors on the other transports.

From a ship lying at anchor came a stentorian voice over the water through a megaphone: "Who are you?"

Through pasteboard horns our men answered, "Royal Canadians! Who are you?"

The answer came, "Australians! Shake!" Then the cheering, one contingent for the other, was loud and long, and the voices of the colonial cousins-in-arms were soon hoarse from the shouting of mutual congratulations. The transport of the Gordon Highlanders welcomed us, as did a dozen others, as we passed into the wharf. Lying at the other side of the pier at which the "Sardinian" tied up at was the R. M. S. "Dunvegan Castle," and from the aft rail of that vessel the bandmaster stood pealing out on his silver cornet, "Rule Britannia," in which all fighting men in the harbor joined; and we were next glad to note how many could take up the refrain of the "Maple Leaf Forever!" as our men sang it with lusty voices, while the Canadian transport's sides cringed against the dock and then lay quiet.

We were at Cape Town!

The Colonel came back to the ship about half-past six, and found his men as anxious as rats in a trap to get off the ship.

It was too late to disembark, so they stayed where they were, climbing on the rail and dock-sides of the ship, till the "Sardinian" looked like a disabled vessel, with a decided list to starboard.

There was a curious, and in some cases an anxious crowd around our boat, curious to see what the men from the land of snow, as they thought, looked like, anxious because our boat

was some days behind the expected time of arrival.

Soldiers, sailors and civilians flocked to the pier to chat with the wearers of the Maple Leaf. There were white men, black men, and people of neutral tint, Christians and otherwise, principally otherwise. They were generally a kind-hearted crowd, as was proved by the number of cigarettes and other refreshing dainties which they tossed up on to our decks.

"How's the war?" "Where's Buller?" "Who holds Pretoria?" "How far is it to Ladysmith?" were the questions thrown at the people on the docks, and before a reasonable answer could be given, another set of queries was hurled at these unoffending sight-seers. "Where is Oom Paul?" "How's General Joubert?" "Any room for us at the front?" and many more interrogations of a similar kind.

Black "boys," some as old as sixty, scrambling for coppers, and the tramping of a fatigue party to the dock, to help unload the "Sardinian's" goods, were the last sights the men saw before they turned in to their accustomed bunks on board the ship.

All night long, in the confused darkness, men were engaged in getting on shore what was needed for the contingent when it stepped on land.

Meanwhile, there being no restriction then which could hamper the steps or writing of a war correspondent, a couple of us, who had crossed

the ocean in that capacity, started up to the town, gladdened on our way at the first crossing by finding a horseshoe, which was afterward a cherished relic in our tent.

Cape Town had just let loose its heterogeneous throng of workers from its shops, work-houses and factories, who were streaming along the streets near the wharves and filling the wider thoroughfares of the upper town. Truly, from the general hue of the populace, it was a black man's country, and from the gaudily dressed Kaffirs and Malay Indians to the dirty, slovenly, and barefooted types of the same races, the capital of the colony seemed to take four-fifths of its population. Pushing crowds of these dark-skinned people, together with their less swarthy companions of a bastard race, swarmed on the stone-paved streets; and in the case of meeting these laughing, ivory-teethed loiterers, the weaker had to go to the wall, or the open street, for Cape Town's black men show little sign of gracefully giving one even that part of the walking thoroughfare which the law grants him. Their glib gutterals of constant, ceaseless conversation were to be heard in plenty on all sides, till one wondered whether or not their jabbering jaws ever took a respite from work.

Then, too, in the thoroughfares there were the typical Englishmen who had made South Africa their field for fortune-hunting, mingling with the colonial-born citizens with their common low standard accents, bred in former generations

with refinement, but now to an extent degenerated, and also the pale-faced anæmic Dutch of the city. One was impressed with the absence of any kind of high grade standard which ruled the town, and noted the unthoroughness of the majority of its population.

Traffic in the tumult was carried on with a superabundance of noise, and wherever one looked might be seen the bobbing of a black man, perched high on the seat of a hansom, topped with a wide, fantastic hat, and his whip snapping and cracking through the air as he wheeled off with a couple of officers of the overcrowded soldier city. Electric cars clanged up and down the streets with their passengers, for the most part, sitting on the open seats above the top. Long rows of carriages and two-wheelers stood with their rear red danger lamps flaring, at frequent intervals along the principal streets.

Bells rang, announcing special war bulletins and extras at the principal newspaper offices, and people hastened through the middle of the streets, as is always their wont in Cape Town, to see what might be the latest news from the seat of war. The front of the railway depot was glutted with an idle people, and even the platform, where only ticket-holders were allowed, had its complement of tired travellers.

In the single decent opera house of which the city boasts, people flocked to hear a mediocre play, and between the acts sauntered out to the small, round, marble-topped tables at the landing

in front of the main entrance, where men and women drank and laughed together, where there was a constant clinking of glasses, a jovial spirit over all, and little thought of the war, even in their own colony, in which we had come to take part.

In the hotels hasty accommodation was given to the hordes who flocked there for food, shelter and drink. Bars were crowded behind with busy bar-maids, whose deep blushes, which could be procured at any apothecary shop, were not as enduring as the glib tongues they used to banter the joking customers. In front of the long counters of the sample rooms, soldiers, civilians and sailors, stood drinking deep the health of the Empire, though I must admit the sailors generally took refuge for their tottering sea legs on the long benches provided for the incapacitated along the walls. A sailor never seems to walk as well on land as he does on the decks of his own ship.

At the corners, till late at night, close-welded groups of Kaffirs guffawed till one would imagine there was no more animation left in them, and young officers, with their cultivated military stride, brushed past, settling the plans of the whole campaign, with the weight of a nation resting prematurely on their one-starred shoulders.

Policemen also, as in most other cities, walked around, being careful to keep out of the mud, and enjoyed the metropolitan panorama as well as did any other class of persons.

It was Cape Town at night—it was not Canada. We did not expect it, nor did we prefer it.

Down at the ship *reveillé* sounded unusually early on the morning of the 30th of November —at 4.30—but even then, there was scarcely need for the call, for the soldiers were awake before the sun began to play on the top of Table Mountain. Though the night in dock had been one of some sleep, it was more one of anticipation.

Excited soldiers did their last packing up, and prepared their movable houses and belongings for the fray. They talked of Boers and bayonets, and referred to scalps as would the chief of a Comanche tribe of Indians.

However, their bold boasts ceased and their excitement abated by eight o'clock, when they were marched off the boat, and again had their feet on land, which they had not even touched for exactly one month.

Parade and inspection, and the well-pleased look of the Colonel, augured well for the day.

Cape Town was *en fete* with flags, bunting and decorations in honor of the colonials, it having been the intention of the citizens to give a double welcome to the Australians and Canadians, but since the lanky men from the Antipodes had preceded us a couple of days in landing, the men of the Royal Canadians had this particular piece of loyalty shown in their honor alone. People who had not had a previous chance of seeing even part of the Canadian regiment, were out in

and precipitously back over the farthest edge of the fading earth. The sun sank instantly—and it was dark.

"Worcester!" shouted the guard of the train, as the contingent rolled in at a small station of that name, and stopped for a moment at the edge of the stone-built platform.

"What a 'saucy' name," said Private Banker, "I suppose we eat here, this station savors of beefsteak."

"You haven't time chum," offered the guard, who overheard the remark, and saved the North-West Corporal, who was in the same compartment, the trouble of using these gloomy words.

"Matjesfontein next station!" the guard shouted as the train pulled out.

"That sounds like a hot meal," the ex-banker went on, keeping up his spirits by jesting a little.

"I'll bet we don't get any 'scoff' (food) there either," joined in his comforting Corporal, as he joyfully eyed a neat parcel of tinned sausage, resting quietly in the luggage-rack above him, and which he had procured in Cape Town. Then he continued:—"Say, Banker, you're always thinking of something to eat."

"Well," answered the Private, as he brushed the mist off the car window, and peered out into the darkness, "you know your's is not the only rusty rifle in the regiment. There are others."

The discourse at once drifted on to more general topics, and the engines still snorted along the

straight steel path, which, but for the glare of the brilliant headlight, was as black as Hades itself.

Songs, conversation, and an impromptu jig or two occupied the soldiers' hours, till, within a few miles of Matjesfontein, they were all able to take in a couple of hitches in their belts, reminding them that the inner man, though still alive, would be glad of a little more attention.

Three short blows of the piercing whistle of the engine, an inconsistent slackening of the speed of the train, a sudden jolt, and all heads were thrust out of the window.

"Matjesfontein!" yelled the train guard. "All out for twenty minutes' refreshments!!"

North-West Corporal was already on the platform, followed in quarter-column by every other man of the Royal Canadian Regiment.

There was a good meal provided, the scene of the eating of which I shall leave to the reader to depict for himself.

Instead of the "All aboard!" heard at the stations in this country, the guard shouted out, according to the English custom, "All seats, please!" and, at the expiration of half an hour, to the signal of the swinging to and fro of the guard's green lantern, the Canadians with belts pressed back to their normal notches, were again whirling north through the thick of a starless night.

As best they could the soldiers stowed themselves away to sleep on the rough berths overhead and on the seats, tossing often for choice of

position, the loser of course having to improvise some plan whereby he could rest his nodding head.

By and by all was quiet on the train, and the occasional saw-mill sound of a snoring soldier, and the rumbling of the spoked-wheels of the railway carriages, was all that could be heard; but these were no disturbance to the tired tourists.

The next station, Three Sisters, was scarce a stopping place, but the engineer pulled up for orders.

"Three Sisters!" roared the guard at the top of his voice, as he jumped from his van at the back of the train, and, *mirabile dictu*, five hundred heads that were supposed to be sleeping were in an instant shot out of the Canadian cars in a very enquiring way.

A few miles farther north was another peculiarly named depot.

"Biesjes Bull!" hollered the ever watchful guard, as the train paused there.

"I'd like to see it," whispered Private D. to his friend, who was hedged in behind him, the two in a single birth, "you know we keep cattle at home."

"I heard something bump," the friend murmured from out his smothering sleeping place, "I wouldn't wonder if we killed the poor beast—but never mind—it's Boers we're after, not bulls," and the two turned face-on, and went to sleep again.

Still climbing the steep incline the panting trains persevered and, passing in turn Grasberg,

Victoria Road, Richmond Road (where Surgeon-Captain Osborne, of Hamilton, Ontario, who had come out with the contingent, was stationed for duty), Deelfontein and Mynfontein, landed the first half of the Canadian regiment at De Aar Junction at 3 o'clock on Sunday morning, December 3rd. The left half arrived an hour later.

The five-hundred-mile trip lasted some forty-four hours, and here, in a village of 600 population, 4,180 feet above the level of the sea, the men of the Royal Canadians pitched their tents for their first short camp up country.

CHAPTER XIII.

IN THE SANDS OF DE AAR.

A FOUR days' stay at De Aar Junction was enough for any civilized body of men, for, when it is considered that the scene in the first chapter is a typical example of the atmospheric conditions there, it is surely explanation enough why the soldiers were ever ready to leave this important strategical point and proceed farther north.

The Canadian regiment marched a short distance to their quiet camping ground to the east of the station, and as they plodded along in step, stirring up the pulverized sand, the first choking sensations of this camp came to them.

The battalion tramped down a slow incline and over a rotten bridge. They were swinging along in splendid style, and they started to take the bridge in the same way.

"Break step, men!" shouted Capt. Weeks of "G" Company, "never go over a bridge in step, because the strain is liable to break it down." They broke step and ever after they knew how to cross a bridge.

On the circle of almost inaccessible kopjes, which all but surrounded De Aar, the Royal

Engineers had already done some excellent work, building wide roads up the steep sides of the small mountains, over which big guns were hauled and placed in the well-made stone fortifications on top. Howitzers and nine-pounder guns, commanding the country from all sides of De Aar, made it a safe, though not a comfortable place to camp. By our side here, lay the 2nd Battalion Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry, under command of Lieut.-Col. Ashby.

All small places in South Africa have better hotels than one might expect, and De Aar was no exception to this rather good rule. The roomy little hostelry was crowded, and lucky a couple of us were to be able to divide the hall up as a temporary sleeping place, supplying, as we did, our own blankets, and using valises for pillows.

A young English gentleman who was sharing his room with four others at that hotel was greatly interested in the Canadians since his father had been Governor-General of Canada. He was Lord Basil Blackwood, the third son of Lord Dufferin.

I asked him what he was doing up there.

"Oh!" he said with a smile and his black eyes twinkling, "I am trying to get to the front, just as a spectator to see the fun, but it's no use apparently, they will not give me a pass beyond this point, and I can only stay here a limited time on the permit that I have. You know I have two brothers who are at the front, both

officers. One is with General Buller near Ladysmith, and the other in the 12th Lancers at Modder River."

We had many a pleasant chat together about Canada, and he left, before we did, to go south to Victoria Road to try again for the much coveted pass.

Two weeks after that just after the battle of Magersfontein I met Lord Basil Blackwood as we got on the train after that great slaughter of the Highland Brigade, and started south to Belmont.

"Well," I said, "you got your pass all right."

"No I didn't, but I got here though," he answered, with a look of satisfaction.

"How did you manage it," I asked.

"It was this way," he went on, "when I got to Victoria Road they refused me permission to come up, so I just got on a passing train, and when we neared a station, and the cars were examined, I was 'cached' safely under the seat. After repeating the operation a few times I reached this (Modder River) station, and as this is as far as the train went, I got out. Without reporting to the camp commandant, I started straight to where I found my brother's tent was. He at once fitted me out in kharki and I have stayed here till now. I saw the Magersfontein battle, messed with the Lancer officers, and now I am going south again, to see if they will not grant me a pass to get up to the front."

All that was to be seen at De Aar could be gone over in a day, so that there was not much

to interest the regiment as they groped about in the sand and storms at this junction.

The novelty of the coal-black Kaffirs attracted the soldiers, and the Kaffir beer which they sold to the men was more repulsive than palatable. Of course they all had to taste it. The seductiveness of the refreshment lay in the name of it; not in its taste by any means. It smelled like sour yeast, and was somewhat thinner. It was a sickening purplish color and kept working all the time, and there were not a few who choked and gagged on the dainty Kaffir refreshment when they tried it.

The opening of the De Aar camp on the early Sunday morning was as peaceful a Sabbath as I have ever seen. The quiet camp plain lay in the hollow of the gigantic saucer, to which that place might be likened. The men, fatigued with the journey from Cape Town, dropped down in their tracks, after their arms had been piled; and slept as peacefully under a burning sky as one could imagine they would in the shadiest of bowers. There was no divine service of any kind, no church parade, not even the sound of a song or hymn, to break what was an awed calm over the silent little garrison. It was genuine quiet, unalloyed.

Then the noon came, and the sands began with a shifting, swinging motion, and, apparently wrought to anger at the inactivity of the place, swept in and out and everywhere, flinging the order of the camp to the winds, and brought

desolation and the direst discomfort to the soldiers.

The parade, ordered for the afternoon, was cancelled on account of this terrible tornado; tents were filled with the blinding, sifting sand, and food that otherwise would have been a most welcome essential, was so covered with the flying dirt, that it became but an idle mockery of a meal.

These storms were genuine North-West Territory and Dakota blizzards, the top of the African veldt taking the place of Canada's snow.

Of course that day no cooking could be done, so that water and biscuits for the time being formed the men's food supply.

Martial law was in force, and all the citizens of the hamlet were compelled to be in their houses by nine o'clock at night, and the blacks had to seek their shelters, down in the "location" where they resided, just outside the village, an hour earlier. The bar at the hotel had very stingy hours, and only for a small part of the day was the proprietor allowed to do business on that part of his estate.

Pickets and guards were stationed all over the garrison, while military or garrison police made life unbearable for even those who tried to mind their own business. I think that in most cases the garrison police, chosen from the ranks of different regiments, were the most overbearing lot that both soldiers and civilians had to do with in South Africa. They were constantly imbued

with the idea that, since they were placed in a position to prohibit certain things being done, it devolved on them to stop or prevent the other soldiers from doing almost anything. An ordinary policeman, perhaps, is not looked on with as much favor as he might be, but military police are the bane of a battalion. Among the Royal Canadian Regiment, I must say, could be found exceptions far outside of this general rule.

This was De Aar, and a daily repetition of this uninviting routine was the experience of our men there, so that it was greeted with delight when the order came late on the night of the 6th of December that the regiment was to entrain for Orange River the next morning at 5 o'clock. No tears were shed when the battalion closed its eyes for the last time, in what will ever be known as the sandiest camp of the campaign.

Reveillé sounded in the dark the next morning, and by the light of a few dim candle-lanterns the tents started to come down, and the operation was completed as the first rays of the sun glinted over the edge of the rounding kopje, just to the east of the Canadian lines.

Early in their career did the Royal Canadian Regiment begin to do things in the most approved and systematic way, and even in striking camp after the De Aar stay the sand-stained tents passed through the different stages of being lowered to the ground by the sound of the whistle in the Color Sergeant's hands, so that by this simultaneous system among companies con-

fusion was averted, and uniformity was sustained.

On parade to the north of the depot Quartermaster Major Denison had wisely made provision whereby the men were served that morning with copious draughts of warm coffee.

When the train pulled along to where the men stood, and the order was given for them to take possession of their railway accommodation, there was a hurrying of feet and an eager desire to immediately shake, as far as possible, the clinging sands of De Aar from off each man's shoes.

The regiment was destined for Orange River, seventy-five miles farther north, almost due north, but slightly east, where the tawny Orange River, after passing through the Boer and rebel-infected districts of Kenhardt and Pruska, and passing the Dutch towns of Douglas and Hopetown, on its circuitous route, cuts the Cape Government railway a couple of miles past the station which bears its name.

The regiment was being truly carried to the highlands of South Africa, for, whereas we had been 4,180 feet above the level of the sea at De Aar, we had, twenty miles farther north at Hout Kraal, attained an altitude of 4,277 feet.

At the next station north, Potfontein, and still farther on at Paauw Pan, inquisitive ostriches began to make their appearance, and stare wonderingly from behind the wire fences on the farms at the wearers of the Maple Leaf. They came as close to the train as their bounds would

allow them, and then, stretching their limp necks out as far as possible, they scrutinized the men with their sharp, blinking eyes, far set forward in their disproportionate heads. They might almost have been believed to be Boer sympathizers, so keen were they on apparently listening to the war conversation among the men. Their presence appeared to be purely on a detective mission.

When the train stopped for a short rest at Krankuil, a couple of stout Dutch girls, with a poor comprehension of the English language, handed out pails of water to the thirsty soldiers. The young ladies, ensconced in their huge colored sun-bonnets, were quite oblivious to the dozens of kind compliments paid them for their thoughtfulness, and clattered away to each other all the time in the Taal, in what was, of course, an unintelligible tongue to our men.

The water was free, but the heavy cakes they offered, with ready buyers, were disposed of easily at three for sixpence.

The next station was Orange River.

CHAPTER XIV.

ORANGE RIVER CAMP.

THE first morning the Royal Canadians were at Orange River station, and before they had had an opportunity to put up their tents, they were kept for some hours sweltering under a broiling sun without any protection whatever, while the officers in charge of the camp discussed in the station whether or not the Gordon Highlanders' half battalion or the Canadians should be sent up to Modder River. The Gordons won the day, and after having lain on a very dusty camp ground lately vacated by another none too clean regiment, the Canadian soldiers were given orders to pitch their tents. If the question which had bothered the officers had been settled, as it seems it might have been, hours before, our men would have had the much needed benefit of rest and shelter; but, as it was, they had as hard a day lying in the hot sand on the open as they would have had in most engagements. At any rate this is only one of many cases where the men and officers suffered on account of the apparent inability of Imperial officers to come to a decision with reference to the movement of troops. No doubt the men were restive and of course unable

to see why they should be kept unnecessarily broiling on the open when they were most eager to either get away on the train which waited impatiently for them, or to put up their tents and have a few degrees less heat.

The Adjutant had the men march a couple of times from station to camp ground, and from camp ground (with its scantily-covered latrines, probably pregnant with fever) to station; and a reasonable view to take of the situation was that the officers in charge were totally unable to tell what was to be done with the Canadians. One consolation on that memorably hot day was a dirty old trough, a piece of badly worn hose and a pump, where from an improvised combination of the three most of the soldiers were able to get a drink of the lukewarm water. The water in this trough which the men sought after so eagerly looked more than anything else like a mixture of milk and soap.

There was also another pump across the railway at a rough boarding-house. No person that I saw was there to warn the men not to use it, and the only reason some of them regretted having done so, was that after it had been freely partaken of, the consoling rumour was circulated that the Boers some days before had poisoned the well. Water taken under such circumstances is liable to make any ordinary man persuade himself that he has pains which do not augur well for his future physical welfare.

Like De Aar, the despised camp ground of all

the Royal Canadians, Orange River, with its constant marching of troops, soon became a protracted area of the finest blowing sand. In fact, all the natural features of the South African landscape seemed to combine against the poor soldier during this campaign. The water would not clarify itself; the sand was never satisfied to rest quietly in its earthly place; the rocks seemed to move from their ordinary positions to come and impede the soldiers, and even the shrubs and bushes, which grew so plentifully on the veldt, were not content at inconveniencing the men without also growing nettley branches to sting the men's legs.

At any rate, Nature had moved into South Africa before the soldiers, and these natural impediments had to be contended with. At first our men felt them a great deal more than they did after being for months on the Dark Continent, and it may have been the first great changes they were subjected to that made them remember so distinctly what repulsive places De Aar and Orange River were.

When one remembers the great repulse Lord Methuen had at Magersfontein and considers what the Royal Canadian Regiment would have looked like after that reverse, if they had been in the Gordon Highlanders' place, then a person is forced to say that what seemed ill-fortune at not being able to proceed farther north from Orange River on the morning I have mentioned, was the best of luck for the battalion.

If one of the Majors of the Royal Canadian

Regiment refused to take command of the left half battalion (E, F, G and H companies) and proceed north when told to do so by the Colonel of the regiment on the day we arrived at Orange River, even though his act is nothing short of rank insubordination, he probably saved by his stubborn stand many a Canadian who was then not as ready to fall, in so far as capacity of a soldier goes, as he was later in the campaign.

Though disappointed, as all young soldiers would be under the circumstances, the men soon came from the abnormal state of eagerness for the front to the normal state, and by nightfall of the first twenty-four hours at Orange River they were permitted to put up their tents, that is so far as officers' permission went. But there were certain other elements to be counted on, as there always were in South Africa. Even at half-past six that night the heat was 96 degrees under canvas.

The tardiness in giving the order to pitch their canvas walls gave the men and officers the first chance in South Africa of receiving a drenching such as Canadian people at home have scarcely the capability of realizing the severity of.

The first day at Orange River, as may be clearly understood, was one of apparently general dissatisfaction; little or nothing to eat, stinking, slushy water to drink, no tents for shelter on a hot summer day (December 7th) in Africa, and a terrible rain storm, which came on just as the men were in the act of getting their canvas spread.

At Orange River the regiment met Major Cartwright, who went out with the First Contingent attached for special duty, and who was then Railway Staff Officer at that station.

The regiment had, as they then thought, come within actual smell of the enemy's powder, but there was yet a great deal to be done before our men were given their tests, first on New Year's Day, 1900, under Capt. Barker, sending the name of "C" Company flashing over the wires, as a break in a list of none too successful engagements in Cape Colony, when the Sunnyside affair took place, and later the famous Paardeberg engagements, which made the name of Canada echo nobly around the world.

In speaking with Major C. King Hall, of the Munster Fusiliers, who was then camp commandant at Orange River, he rather smiled at the idea of our men being disappointed at not going to the front in the Gordon's stead. He told me that only the night before the Boers, at Enslin Siding, fifteen miles farther north, had in force of 1,000 raided the railway line and did a little dynamiting, and with their one gun were only driven off when the Northamptons (two companies), 12th Lancers, and Seaforth Highlanders, came down from Modder River.

This was in a way good news, in that we knew we were not altogether what might be called "out of range of the enemy."

There were two or three special incidents which, together with those mentioned, stand out

most prominently in connection with the regiment's short, but still long enough, stay at Orange River.

The first thing which seemed peculiar was the style of work the Canadians were, on the morning of the second day, given to do. The primary object of the men from Canada was to fight, and they had a puzzled look on their faces when it was told them that they were to build a railway siding and a landing goods platform. To be detailed for such technical work as constructing a short railway was, indeed, about farthest from their minds, but it was a good breaking in for them, and gave them their first lesson in receiving and carrying out unexpected orders.

Two hundred men were assigned to this duty and five officers, Capt. Barker, Lieuts. Mason, Kaye, Pelletier, and Swift. Imagine officers and men who had in some cases been used to doing no other work than studying or practising a profession, or sitting in a counting house, or farming, being asked to build a railway siding. True, they all had some idea of soldiering, but no experience in railway construction. When the two hundred had got over their astonishment they started in, after having been told that a few days before the Gordon Highlanders and Australians had done some good work along the same line. This gave them a bit of stage fright, but it also served to bring out more strongly Canadian adaptability. There had to be Canadian adaptability or there would have been no rail-

way siding nor any landing goods platform. Then hands that had never handled a spade or a pick, or a shovel, started to work with a will, and two hundred men of the regiment were soon perspiring at their navvies' work. There was, of course, great astonishment on the little station platform when the Canadian officers in charge of the work took off their kharki tunics and with the men were able to soil their hands, too, at the work. Those faultlessly dressed British officers in camp were scarcely able to realize that an officer was able to join commonly with his men at a mutual task, but since seeing is believing, they then had a practical demonstration which gave even them a more startled look than our men had when they were assigned the task.

The ingenuity of the men was not dormant by any means, and as the work proceeded there was scarcely a man who did not come to some of the officers and offer a good suggestion, whereby their undertaking was facilitated. "I think I have seen it done this way, Sir," or "Sir, we would gain time if such a thing were done," and so on, and even though they were at something totally new, every little bright idea added to the speedy conclusion of the affair. And how those men did dig and pick and struggle with heavy railway sleepers and iron rails. They were like a modern generation of mound builders—and all they had to do their measuring with and to complete their calculations was string in pieces and sticks.

It was a tiresome task, but the men took a pride in being able to so readily turn their hands to such foreign work, and they laughed and chatted, while the French Canadians in the "gang" kept up a rapid current of conversation. The result was that within the day a large double, well constructed landing goods platform was made, and the Canadians also had to their credit one whole half-mile of railway track. Then there was more wondering by Imperial officers. How could they do it all in such a short time.

As the men cleaned off their shovels and put their picks away a train drew into the station, and Lieut.-Col. Girouard, also a Canadian, a graduate of the Royal Military College of Kingston, stepped out of one of the carriages. He had been with Kitchener as Director of Railways in the Soudan, and he had just come to the south of the Dark Continent to fill the same position during the South African campaign. His unstinted praise of the work the men had done was a compliment which was not soon forgotten. There had been a lot of tired men in the regiment the night before, but there were two hundred extra tired ones on the night of December 8th.

Two nights sufficed for the Canadians at Orange River, during the first of which a very sad shooting accident occurred in the Shropshire regiment, which was lying side by side with our men and which battalion was at a future date to form part of the now famous 19th Brigade along with the Royal Canadians.

The country around for miles was strongly patrolled at night and every precaution was taken to keep the Boers from taking our little garrison by surprise.

Out into the dark night the Shropshires sent a heavy picket with instructions to the men to be very careful to challenge every person who might come in or out of camp. At the foot of a kopje one of the men of the Shropshires stood on sentry, another private of the same regiment was returning to camp. The sentry promptly challenged, "Halt! who comes there?" and failing to call "Friend," the returning soldier said, "Oh, you know me." These were fatal words, for no sooner had they been spoken when three ringing shots sounded through the Orange River garrison, three steady shots from the sentry's rifle, and his companion-in-arms fell, never to rise to life again. It was an unfortunate occurrence which cast gloom over the whole camp, but it shows that the rigidity of military discipline should not be trifled with.

For the first time the seriousness of the actual campaign broke on the Canadian regiment, and again the next day as a sad and impressive funeral cortege wended its way out over the sandy veldt, the men from our Dominion saw in reality a dark side which to them was new, and attended with a solemnity which was doubly solemn on the sands of Africa.

To slow music with bayonets fixed and arms reversed the creeping kharki procession passed

by the lines of the Royal Canadians, and a hush came on the camp. Then it was that many a man shuddered as he thought of a burial in South Africa, thousands of miles from where any of his friends could ever see his grave or ever plant a flower on his last resting place.

There are times at war when one is pensive and reflective, that is when one sees a comrade buried with all the impressive ceremony of a military funeral. When the muffled drums resound but to a slow dirge; when the gun carriage with its gloomy coffin load, wrapped in a Union Jack death pall, lumbers along to a waiting grave, unsympathetically jolting the soldier on the way to his last lone bed. Sorrow is written on the faces of every rugged and sunburnt man of arms, as with reluctant steps he nears the burial place of his lost companion. The funeral notes of the mournful music have the effect of striking into a living man's soul a deep hatred of death in a foreign clime. The sand or limestone "six feet of earth," on a South African field, seems but a mean mockery of a proper grave; the shallow bed seems too short for that last long sleep, too narrow for a quiet rest of such duration as it is bound to be. The sewn-up blanket in which the soldier is shrouded makes at times but a poor, scanty apology for the sound coffin one is used to seeing on such occasions in peace time. The spades of earth thrown in on the human form as it bulges in the blanket seems a scarce sepulchre; the volleys from the muzzles of the rifles over

the grave are like empty messages to the dead, and the quivering "last post," which the bugles blast over the silent mound after the burial service, are but a brazen farewell to the soldier as he lies free from the care of campaign, "where the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest."

Then, according to military custom, the burial party starts from the lonely spot, and, where they before had come marching to slow music, the band at once strikes up a quickstep, and as if tired of the tedium of the service, swing with a dashing air back to the camp, till Death's hand beckons another fighter home, and the dead marches are again called into requisition.

CHAPTER XV.

A CANADIAN PICKET'S CATCH.

ON the second night at Orange River, the Royal Canadian Regiment furnished the picket for part of the dark outlying district, and was in charge of Lieut.-Col. Stuart Wilkie, of "C" Company.

On account of the known close proximity of the enemy, the men on guard had all been warned to pay the strictest attention to those who went into camp or came out. The unfortunate shooting affray among the Shropshire regiment the night before had also had the effect of instilling into our men the cause for great care—still they were to leave no spies hanging around the precincts of the camp.

The essence of darkness seemed to jam itself into every nook and corner, it permeated the air and filled itself between the iron rocks of the steep kopjes. It was a night, for the first part at least, two shades blacker than ebony, and one on which it was not hard for the sentries to lose one another.

The men faltered over the stone strewn veldt on their way to their post, for on those nights it was easier to fall than to keep one's feet. Still

the little procession pitch on on their uneven path till their destination was arrived at, and then it seemed a trifle lighter, since the men had become more used to their surroundings.

Each man in turn trod his black beat, and far into the night, and on into the early morning came the same strain over the quiet camp, "number one, all's well!" then "number two, and a-a-ll's w-e-l-l!!" and away off to the right came the isolated voice of number three, and his drolling, "a-a-ll's w-e-l-l!"

It seems to be a consolation for a lone sentry to yell out that all is well, at the end of the time appointed for that cry, because, for a half-hour or an hour he has been parading alone, thinking to himself, with no person to speak to, and then, as if giving vent to his pent-up feelings, he can in these few long-drawn-out words release his pent-up soul.

All was well for four or five times on guard, and then waking the sleeping Private D., who had contorted himself into the shape of a "praying mantus," so frequently met with in South Africa, the Sergeant of the guard sent him out on his turn for "sentry go."

He pulled his belt into its proper position, straightened out his great coat, adjusted his side-arm and started out bravely (?) with his Lee-Enfield slung over his shoulder.

"Be very careful about the pass at the far end of the kopje," the Sergeant warned him as he started out.

"Right you are, Sergeant," returned the Private, glad of a chance to use his newly-acquired English term again.

"I don't like the look of this end of the ridge," the cautious young sentry thought to himself as he passed along the place he was warned about, "Seems to me that end near the guard-house needs more careful attention, and besides there's a light up there—and it's far more home-like. Guess I'll do double duty nearer the boys, no use inviting Boers to have a brush with a fellow." He strolled back nearer his companions, and hovered around, far enough away so that his footsteps could not be constantly heard. He was leaning on his rifle, debating with himself how long the war would last, when, at the blacker end of the ridge he heard a shuffling, creeping sound in the low bushes on the veldt, and a tin can rattled over the stones. In his utter astonishment he dropped his rifle, turning for an instant with courage enough to shout, "Who's there?"

A few steps took him to the Sergeant of the guard.

"There's some person trying to get through the lines Sergeant," he said, "I think by the way they walk, they're Boers."

"Well, did you challenge them?" asked the Sergeant, hastily.

"Yes,—I asked them who it was, and there was no reply."

"You didn't shoot, did you?" the Sergeant continued.

"No,—I didn't exactly shoot, but I scared them pretty well," Private D. averred.

"Why, man, where's your rifle?" the Sergeant questioned, looking the fidgety soldier over from head to foot.

"It's out there; I have it handy," the sentry returned, half apologetically.

"Guard turn out!" yelled the Sergeant, and the men sprang to arms and proceeded toward the black end of the ridge.

"Where is the spot?" the Sergeant of the guard demanded, and as there was no reply, he called for Private D., who was quite the last man of the lot.

"I'm here ready"—and that without a rifle—"and if the rest of you don't get them I will."

They walked on silently, and in the very faint light which was making itself apparent, and sure enough there close to a huge rock, crouched down, were the invaders, who dared to cross a Canadian picket. The two noticed the picket coming and crouched in the short scrub lower than ever.

"There they are!" said Private D., cautiously, as he was just able to discern a movement of their black figures.

The party approached to within fifty paces of the spies, when the Sergeant halted the men; then, when they had put their rifles at the "present," he stepped to one side. "Be very careful," he warned them, "and don't shoot unless you have to."

Then to the enemy he shouted, "Halt! who goes there?" No reply.

Again, louder, "Halt!! who goes there?"

And for the last time, as the men fingered their rifles uneasily, he began the challenge. It was too much for the intruders, and both, tethered together, rose clumsily from the ground, flapped their long ears, brayed once or twice and took themselves to a spot where they could graze and sleep in more perfect quiet.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE BELMONT GARRISON.

THE stay at Orange River from December 7th to Saturday, December 9th, was long enough for the Canadians, who had even in that short time given ample proof of their ability in several lines, especially the railway line. Outside of many inconveniences incident on that camp, it was not the most healthful position for our men to tent on, since they were lying on the ground where former regiments had left covered up refuse and garbage pits and other ill-smelling holes of pestilence, which were afterwards blamed by Surgeon-Major Wilson of the Royal Canadians for some of the sickness which made itself apparent in the regiment shortly after it had moved from the River camp.

True, the location held a certain fascination by reason of the river which flowed with its yellow-tinged tide a mile or so to the north of the lines, and members of other regiments made the Canadians envious by telling them of the good bathing and excellent swimming places which were to be found there. It is a fact that bathing parties used to sally out to the river, but never then without their rifles with them, and the men alto-

gether prepared for an attack or a skirmish, so that a bath under these circumstances was attended by as much mental worry as the physical delight was worth; and too, the Orange River, like so many African watercourses, was as treacherous as it was meandering, and the fact that several pools looked inviting to the soldiers was no guarantee that there were not deep hidden undercurrents to threaten the men's lives. Altogether the volunteer regiment was glad to leave the attractions and discomforts of this place behind, and again take train for the north.

On this Saturday morning no closed carriages were provided for the men, such as they had when coming from Cape Town. In their places was substituted a train of open trucks, while up ahead were the covered carriages occupied by the officers.

The men piled and jammed into these cars as best they could, some tired and sitting down, others lying full length on the bottom of the trucks, and dozens sitting on the hot edges of the iron-bound sides, but all apparently willing to ride on the buffers, if necessary, to get a little nearer to the front.

"We don't get covered cars any more to ride in, heh?" said Private Banker, as he scrambled over the side of the open flat car he had been assigned to.

"No," said a sergeant, smiling, "they have given us something better this morning, you see. We're supplied with observation cars—the latest

thing in America—only these are guaranteed to catch all the coal-dust and cinders instead of only part."

"Right you 'aw!" chimed in Private D., who was caged in a tight corner, and who was, with his persistent English accent, already beginning to drop the "r" in the last word.

As the crow flies, the distance from Orange River to Belmont is twenty miles; as the train goes it is some five miles more, and in war time, especially later, it took anywhere from two to seven hours to accomplish the journey.

It was only the right half battalion that left Orange River that morning, and as we left the other companies, "E," "F," "G" and "H" behind, there was indeed a disconsolate look on the faces of those men from Eastern Canada, for their orders at the time were not definite as to when they should follow us. On most of such occasions the right half battalion took precedence, and it was always with anxious hearts and wondering eyes that the men and officers watched the actions of the western men. I hardly think that the right half was favored, but it came that way, and on occasions at least I know that some of the left half battalion officers and men felt that a little partiality was being shown against them. At any rate, each half battalion was anxious at all times to take any lead that was suggested, and to this love of opportunity to go ahead may be attributed much of the Canadians' success on campaign. Their motto should have been "*Semper paratus.*"

The small station of Wittiputs, with a cosy farm near by and a well-stocked store set well back on the road from the depot, were all that was to be seen out of the ordinary, on this morning's change of quarters, and, after standing on curved sidings, for long stretches at a time, to allow south-bound trains to pass, our engines crept slowly up the steep grade south of the future camp ground, over the numerous culverts and deep cuttings in the sand banks, and landed the men at Belmont an hour before noon.

There was not much in the appearance of Belmont to attract any person; a low, well-built stone station-house, with a projecting roof, a substantial long platform, and behind the station a pretence at a hotel, once kept by a Mr. De Kock, who was then a prisoner of the British at Cape Town, awaiting trial as a Boer inciter. His business affairs had been left in the hands of his wife and his numerous children. At the end of the platform was a "shack" of a shop, kept by the avaricious and much bewhiskered Mr. Pavey. Opposite the station was a large goods shed, with here and there a few holes in the roof, the result of being between the British and Boer lines when Lord Methuen and his forces fought over this ground on November 23rd.

The dusty and at places limestone road led to Van Wyck's farm, three miles to the west of the station, and there on that sweltering hot day the Canadians were at once marched, while the sand flies hovered thickly around them.

The Dutch farmer's place proved to be a veritable oasis in the desert, for here from the pump of a great windmill and deep stone well, the men drank of the clear sparkling water, till the regimental police had to be put on guard, to keep the Canadians from overtaxing themselves.

Of course, orders were issued that the farmer's garden of vegetables was to be left alone—though longing eyes were cast at the little patches of green groceries Herr Van Wyck had in a certain state of cultivation. A vicious big watch-dog, which did duty at the front door of the three-roomed house, added force to these orders, and disinclined the too venturesome from coming within a shorter distance than twenty yards of the domicile. The garden so thoroughly protected, the men at once turned their attention to a deep unused well at the side of the windmill, where they "fished with all nets"—principally string, a bent pin, and locusts for bait—for the lazy frogs which disported themselves in the stagnant waters of the shady pool. Some of the best disciples of Isaac Walton were able to secure enough of this long-legged game to have a side-dish for supper, but for the most part, the efforts of the soldiers in this direction were not attended with success. The frogs, recently deluded by some of Lord Methuen's men, held a strict reserve when tempted by Col. Otter's soldiers.

The left half battalion had to languish down at Orange River only another night, and on the following day (Sunday, December 10th), they

arrived in their open trucks at Belmont, deluged in a rainstorm, which soaked them to the skin.

The whole battalion together once more, the camp was changed to the east side of the station, adjacent to De Kock's hen houses, the movements of whose inhabitants were carefully noted by all who had a predisposition for fowl.

On that Sabbath morning an order was issued that the men were not to go up on the kopjes, where the dead Boers of the previous battle were lying, as yet uncovered. Some went and paid the penalty for it afterward. Here, on the ground occupied by the Royal Canadians, the sand was blood red, and identical with that used in hour glasses.

In honor of the welcome change, and the approaching Christmas-tide, the tents as they were put up were decorated as well as possible, and the men settled down for what was to be a long, long, weary stay at Belmont, lasting as it did sixty-five days, or till the 12th day of February, 1900.

Just to the west of the station, and across the railway track, was stationed "P" battery of the Royal Horse Artillery, and as an escort to the guns, the Toronto "C" Company was sent to camp beside the artillerymen.

Lieut.-Col. Otter was at once made camp commandant, with Major Bailey of the New South Wales permanent force as his chief staff officer.

As at Orange River, so here, the men slept with their boots on, ready to turn out at a

moment's notice, and with half hope and half dread of an attack the men rested as best they could, waiting always for a call to arms. But what Boers were there at that time who dared attack even a small garrison on the very ground whence they had been hurriedly routed three weeks before? There were none, and the men might as well have enjoyed sleeping without the thick casing of ammunition boots, but it was better to be safe than sorry, and they did not have to wait long for an alarm.

There were only the Canadians and this one battery of Royal Horse Artillery in camp at the time, and pickets were sent out to the surrounding kopjes all night to guard the small garrison. Just before daybreak reinforcements were always sent out, and after two nights in camp there was a stir. Lieut. Willis was in charge of the picket on Scots' Ridge, the largest kopje of the place, and about three o'clock in the morning his reinforcement was sent to him from the camp, and in the dark, like Private D., he was not able to make out clearly what they were. A report was at once sent in that the Boers were advancing in force on our left front, with guns. The alarm sounded, and the whole camp was soon awake. Down over the railway track "C" Company men were ready in support of the Royal Horse Artillery guns before the artillerists had their horses harnessed, but they were both soon on the move and had the guns in position in a marvellously short time, and very quiet they were about it. The

other seven companies of the R. C. R. I. were sent toward the kopjes to await developments, and just when all were in a nervous state of expectancy, the signal flag flashed from Scots' Ridge that it was a false alarm, and the soldiers returned to their shelters and to sleep.

During the day the distant boom, like muffled thunder, could be heard from the British and Boer guns at Modder River, and soon the ambulance trains, with nurses and physicians, began to ply up the line past Belmont, returning soon with their crowded loads of wounded men from the British disaster at Magersfontein.

Shattered and shot in all parts of the body, the sufferers going south presented a dismal sight.

The Canadians, inquisitive by reason of this new sight on campaign, flocked around the ambulance trains and talked to those who were able to speak.

"Where were you wounded?" one would ask, as a British regular put his head out of the window.

"Ow joost a coople o' raaps on the leg, she'll be better in a few days, hand I shawl 'ave a go at 'em agine," was one answer I remember quite well, and the soldier was as light-hearted as he would be in barracks.

The tap at the Belmont station platform was a fascination for the disabled fighters, and as they leaned out of the carriages they would beckon the Canadians—who were ever ready to oblige—and ask in this style for a fresh fill of a water

bottle: "Oi soi, chummy, would you fetch us a draap of water, lad, my —— throat is —— well quenched with —— thirst!"

"Me, too, pal," another would join in, "fill my —— waterbottle up, till she —— —— runs over. This waater's got —— —— hot."

It may be noticed that in writing ordinary speeches of a British Tommy, a goodly quantity of blanks are required, but the regular soldier in his conversation fills them to the brim every time. They are used by the ordinary private to an extent which is ridiculous, and to a degree which militates against the meaning intended to be conveyed by the epithets.

By and by more trains came down heavy with crippled soldiers, till we began to wonder whether or not Lord Methuen had a sound man left under his command.

These were Belmont's scenes by night and day for a full week. Men going down to the hospitals wounded literally from head to foot, others with less severe wounds from which they would recover in a short time, and more suffering from the damnable enteric fever, dire dyssentry, or the effects of a too violent sun.

It was hard to listen to the echoes of the fighting and not to be in the engagement itself, but as "Heaven from all creatures hides the book of fate," the Canadians in this Magersfontein instance had no cause to complain of their inactivity, for surely their hopes were more than realized ten weeks later!

The longing to see a general engagement seized all in camp, but at that it stopped.

Through the kindness of General Lord Methuen, and the chief press censor, at that time Major Streatfield, who had been out in Canada as military secretary when Lord Lansdowne was here, some of the Canadian war correspondents were allowed to visit the front. While both British and Boer guns were still keeping up intermittent challenges, I visited the battlefield of Magersfontein, but since it in no way relates to the Canadians I shall not presume to take my readers there. Suffice it to say that here, surrounded by the Black Watch and the remnants of the Highland Brigade he had led, we saw the body of General Wauchope placed in the leaden casket in which the gallant leader was buried.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE CHRISTMAS DINNER.

AS the African summer went on, thoughts of a Canadian winter often arose in the men's minds, and while they were having the hottest part of the campaign, in so far as weather went, they longed not a little for the snow and ice which they had been used to at home. Towards the latter part of December all thoughts turned to Christmas. A Christmas on the veldt, the like of which none of the Canadians had ever seen.

The officers called a meeting and decided that the soldiers should have a regular home-like old-fashioned Christmas dinner, and a feast, the like of which they had never seen on campaign.

All was anticipation and an excellent quantity of good things was telegraphed for to Cape Town. Hundred of pounds of turkey, geese, ducks, chickens, plum-pudding, and the like. When the men heard of the order they were beside themselves with expectation.

"I can do a whole turkey baked to a nice brown crisp, and a quart bottle of wine myself," remarked Private Banker, to a number of friends as they discussed the outlook on Christmas eve.

"I'm game for a couple of plum-puddings and

a few mince pies," put in the North-West Corporal, who had not quite forgotten the art of high living.

"Goose, apple-sauce, and doughnuts for me," put in Private D., "if your taking an order put me down there."

"Turkey and cranberry sauce for two," called one of the two chums of the city regiment.

"And no dessert," added his friend as he remembered the experience at Cape Town after the theatre performance.

Tents were brushed up and cleaned in honor of the Christmas-tide, and in many cases small bushes from the veldt were brought in and strewn with trinkets in imitation of Christmas trees.

Small parties were busy trying to decorate the camp lines suitably for the occasion.

"Never mind the fresco work, 'Colors,'" said a Sergeant to the Color-Sergeant of his company, "we'll not have time to look at them to-morrow. We'll eat all day!" and stepping into the tent of his section, he addressed the men. "This feed to-morrow is going to be on the good old lines. The Cap'n has just given me a list of the 'scoff' they've sent for, and here she is."

"Lots of turkey?" asked one.

"Plenty," was the reply.

"Ducks and geese?"

"Any amount."

"Pudding?"

"All kinds."

"Fruit and nuts?"

"To burn."

"Beer?" shouted the section.

"Barrels of it," returned the Sergeant.

So they went through the menu, and like the children of long ago, "visions of sugar-plums danced in their heads."

The sun next morning was up bright and early, the soldiers were up with it.

Over in the goods shed was a large hogshead of beer, which had arrived early. Here the Staff Sergeants had important business all morning, and some of them were finished at noon.

The feast arrived from Cape Town late in the morning, and the fowl that had been expected cooked and dressed, had made the journey alive in wooden crates, and seemed to be as anxious for a Christmas meal as the men were. The chickens, ducks, turkeys and geese, craned their necks through the wooden slats of their coops, and after a supply of grain and water had been given them they took a short rest before their execution, which was formally carried out at the side of the goods shed.

Men flocked around to witness the decapitation of the birds, and imagine their surprise when it was found that by actual count there were only nine chickens, a couple of ducks and a turkey, for each one hundred and fifteen men!

Turkeys were most in demand and when the beheaded fowl were thrown on the ground to die, a few avaricious privates hovered dangerously near. The two city regiment chums had been in

attendance all through the ceremony and watching their opportunity they each grabbed a turkey and concealing the feathered treasures as best they could under their tunics made off with them. The section these men belonged to fared well with the extra luxuries, though some other sections were, on that account, wonderfully shy. Several other soldiers who had the interests of their companies or sections seriously at heart, followed the lead already so boldly given and made off as fast as they could with a few ducks and geese, but it was only the early men who had the courage to take turkeys.

In the afternoon the second in command, Lieut.-Col. Buchan, mounted on an old two-wheeled Scotch cart, addressed the men. He wished them all a merry Christmas and told them that efforts had been made by the officers to give them a sort of Christmas dinner and some beer. He warned them that they should be careful where to draw the line with the latter, and encouraged them by saying that if they did not abuse the beer privilege they would all receive a tot of rum at night.

According to fashion on such occasions dinner was served late, when a hungry and astonished lot sat down to the meal that had so eagerly been looked forward to.

The Sergeant who had read the list of dainties the night before to his men was seated at the head of his section. His air was exceptionally quiet and his face was decidedly impassive as the

soldiers tried to calculate how much was coming to each man.

The dialogue of the night before was in part repeated.

"Lots of turkey," asked one banteringly.

"A little," was the reply.

"Ducks and geese?"

"Small supply."

"Pudding?"

"Just a taste."

"Fruit and nuts?"

"Too rich for your blood."

"Beer?" queried the section.

"Half a pint apiece," said the Sergeant, and with eager eyes staring out of disappointed faces, the Christmas dinner was in short concluded, as the expectations of the men fell, and they laughed at the mock feast.

A large enough order had been sent in to Cape Town, but it was late in going, and there were so many regiments with demands in before the Canadians, that it was hard to secure even those provisions that were sent up. Had the whole order been filled every one of the Royal Canadians would have had a Christmas dinner worthy of the name; as it was, they did not.

The officers' dinner, where there was no dearth of dainties, fowl and meat, where there was an abundance of walnuts and wine, was prepared by the hostess of the quondam hotel, Mrs. De Kock, who outdid herself on that auspicious occasion.

The Christmas of 1899 can never be forgotten by the Royal Canadian Regiment.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE SUNNYSIDE SORTIE.

IT was just before Christmas that Lieut.-Col. T. D. Pilcher was sent up to Belmont and became camp commandant there. It was under him that the Sunnyside, Douglas and Lubbe's farm sorties were made, and this energetic and efficient officer of the Bedfordshire regiment was afterward not overlooked when he was promoted to the command of a mounted infantry corps.

The new camp commandant, wishing to see what the Royal Canadians could do, ordered at route march early one morning, and put them through more advanced work than they had expected. They succeeded admirably in their task, and this commandant did not—as some others did—withhold his praise from the regiment, but was good enough to put his congratulations in the orders that night. During the manœuvres the maxim gun section, in charge of Capt. Bell, had such a steep kopje to ascend with the quick-firing machine that it was impossible for them to lead the mule or take the four-wheeled gun carriage up the hill's rocky sides. Nothing daunted, the men of the section took the

gun off the carriage and carried it to the high position among the rocks on their shoulders.

Then came the Sunnyside affair, which was a pleasant break in the monotony of almost reverses, which the British had been receiving all the way up this line under Lord Methuen.

It had been known that a party of Boers were at some point between Belmont and Douglas, a village 50 miles to the north-west of our garrison, and on the last day of the year 1899, the force to seek them out was mobilized under Lieut.-Col. Pilcher. It consisted of "C" Company (Toronto) of the Royal Canadians, under Capt. Barker and Lieuts. Marshall, Wilkie and Temple, 100 men; Queensland Mounted Infantry, two companies, in charge of Lieut.-Col. Ricardo, 220 men "P" Battery Royal Horse Artillery, commanded by Major de Rougement, 40 men, 2 twelve-pound guns; Imperial Mounted Infantry and Royal Munster Fusiliers, 50 men; two companies of Cornwalls, with Major Ashby in charge; two Queensland maxims and 40 men; two Canadian maxims and 40 men.

On New Year's Day, 1900, this one company of Canadians received their first baptism of fire, but fortunately came out of the brush unscathed. One Queenslander was killed, and the round-up was forty-two Boer prisoners, who were afterward tried as rebels at Cape Town and received a just reward of long terms of imprisonment. The spot of the engagement was called Badenhorstfontein, and it was this minia-

ture battle which first let the world know that the Canadians were at work in the campaign. Since there was but one company of Canadians engaged, this enterprising move has received all that can be afforded to it here. The force reached camp again on the following Friday, after having by far the hardest week of the campaign up to that time, but well rewarded for the move.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE SPIRIT OF UNREST.

THE events to-day were a repetition of those of yesterday, and to-morrow's dull routine would be identical with what would take place during the twenty-four hours which followed, consequently there was plenty of "growsing" (the English army term for complaining) among the Royal Canadian Regiment. At first the grumbling was carried on in the men's minds, then it was audibly made known among them in their camps, and when days of it lengthened into weeks it was not hard for any of the officers, from the Colonel down, to know that dissatisfaction with the long inactivity was rampant in the ranks. Nothing, however, in the internal machinery of that one regiment could change the state of affairs, no person connected with the battalion could order it to the front. There was a brief break in the monotony of the camp, when from time to time the situation of the tents was changed, but even this would not have taken place, but for sanitary reasons. It was indeed disheartening to see passing by the garrison, in train and on foot, many regiments on the way to the front; it was discouraging for men to stand

for hours at a time guarding silent piles of ammunition, and to patrol all night a length of railway track which was as free from the chance of a Boer attack, as would be a Canadian forest. Of course it is not the bounden duty of commandants to tell their men why such and such a move is made, or why a certain order is given, and yet I must admit that an order was generally carried out better by colonial forces when they were given to understand the result of it, or when the efficacy of the undertaking was made clear to them. Not that the men had the presumption to look for explanations by any means, but there were often times when officers condescended to make clear the reason for a certain move, and then, the men grasping the full situation, were the more readily able to enter into the spirit of it.

British officers would no doubt laugh at the idea of giving one iota of explanation to their men, preferring as they have always done to move their wooden chess-men one step at a time, and when the man has been placed in a certain position, he cannot for the life of him tell in which direction his next step will tend. That may be all right for the unthinking soldier he has to lead. The Imperial soldier is not taught to think, and on duty he is not allowed to think. The British Government very kindly employs men to think for him.

The colonial soldiers were different, the Canadians were different and therein lay the secret of their success, when they had to, on almost a

moment's notice take the field and compete with some of the best regiments in the British army. They did not stand for a moment individually and demand a reason for doing so and so, but if they were told that they were to do so and so and what the accomplishment of it would mean, they were then able to use their adaptability and brains in executing the order as quickly and expeditiously as possible.

That is where the soldier who could think and did think, and who could rely, to a small extent at least, on his own resources, was able to take his place along with the British man of the line, and not only equal but surpass in nearly every way the average Tommy.

The man of the British ranks from boyhood has been taught by his leaders to take one step—and another when ordered and not till then, and if he stands in battle two yards from a rock which might save his life, he keeps on standing there. This system has been drilled into him until it has become a part of him. He thinks very little of to-morrow. He will be told what to do when the sun rises. He realizes that he is scarcely a speck on the great wheels of the machinery of the British army and why should he care?

On the other hand turn to the Colonial forces, or that force which more particularly interests here—the Royal Canadian Regiment, and where were they taken from? What were their qualifications that they should, man for man, be compared with the British regular? or why in the

name of common sense should they be preferred? Simply this—nine-tenths of the Canadians on that contingent had been making their own livings at home by reason of honest labor, skill or ingenuity, and no matter by what art, trade or calling, they had been taught to *think* for themselves, to depend on themselves at home for their prosperity.

They had been taken from the farm, the counting-house, the universities, from the ranks of the professions and from the work shop, where in the majority of cases more than the average amount of intelligence was required.

They had been brought from a country whose people have an unbeaten adaptability—from a people who can do more than one thing.

They had been taught from early childhood that they were each a part of the proper working of the world, and to make the best use of their opportunities.

These qualities and traits had been instilled in the men of our regiment, and when they stepped into the ranks of the British army it was still a part of them.

A British General after viewing the work of the Canadians in attack at Paardeberg, said: "Those men can go into battle without a leader, they have intelligence and resourcefulness enough to lead themselves."

They did not stand beside stones waiting for an order to get behind them and save their lives. They saved their lives first and were living to get the order afterward.

I am not trying to reorganize the training of the men of the British Army, nor recommending that they all receive their preliminary training in Canada. I only wish to point out clearly why the Canadians, unaccustomed as they were to the work, were able to cope successfully with the competitors taken from the best regiments of the Imperial service.

So these thinking men of the regiment allowed their thoughts after a while to clothe themselves in words at Belmont, and as the weeks rolled on into months there was a spirit of unrest in the battalion.

Officers, who had stifled the contagion of discontent for a while, fell victims to it, and began among themselves to complain of too long a season on line of communication work, when they knew they were well enough seasoned to go to the front.

The Colonel was most anxious to get away and win his spurs, and at times chances looked bright, but ——.

Now and again a General would take a run up the line and take a look around the camp, where he could almost trip over trenches and fortifications, made mainly by our men around the garrison. Then he would take a private car down the line again, and the regiment would start the rumour that next day the all-important move was to be made. But it did not come till Lord Roberts came, and in the meantime the Canadians put in nine wondering weeks at

Belmont. Camp commandants changed at the station, and as often as this worthy changed, the work of the regiment also took a turn in another direction, and by the time Belmont had had three commandants the regiment was pretty well drilled in three different methods of camp routine.

One was strong on fortifications, and the Canadians fortified everything in sight. Another loved to fight and win glory for himself, and the Canadians chased real and phantom Boers weekly for a radius of thirty miles. The commandant of the regiment wanted to have his men fit for the field—and the Canadians got out and drilled for hours in the day and walked for miles.

So it went, but it all tended to make better men of them, and the novitiate they served at Belmont, in turn served them later in the campaign.

CHAPTER XX.

THE PIPES THAT FAILED.

ONE day at Belmont the train came puffing up the grade and drew an extra heavy breath as she stopped for wind and water at our garrison. There was nothing to attract the soldiers to the platform more than the arrival of an ordinary goods train, with a few soldiers in the carriages which came after the engines. Some of the men, who were well enough to be discharged from hospital were on their way to Modder River to join their regiments again after recuperating since the battle of Magersfontein. A little man hopped out—a man chunky in build, with a good pair of shoulders to support his thick neck. He wore glasses over a pair of hard-working eyes, and his face in a way seemed familiar. I knew I had seen him before, but where, for the time, I could not say. I had it! it was in a hotel at Cape Town. N-o-o, it was not there. However, I had met him recently and was puzzling to remember where. Suddenly it flashed on me where I had made the acquaintance of that face. It was in a strange place, in the back of the last lot of periodicals and magazines that had drifted into the camp. It was in with the advertisements of an old "Harpers," or "The Strand." Those spectacles and the eyes did it all. He was the father of "The Absent-Minded Beggar," and of "Soldiers Three." No person knew him on the

platform, as he found out as much as he could in a short while of the hills and kopjes around the station, where the battle had been fought.

He had come to the front, where there was splendid material for stories, and in coming, he had brought with him what he believed would be a regular prize for the tired, fighting soldiers. His intentions were the best, and most philanthropic.

He was loaded with clay pipes. Now, every man at the front has not even a clay pipe, but it so happened that our men had just been supplied with English briars a short time before.

"Have a pipe?" said the visitor pleasantly to a soldier on the platform.

"Naw," said the soldier, "I got a briar."

"Will you have one?" he asked a sentry who was standing near.

"Never use 'em, Sir," answered the man on his beat.

"Would you care for one of these pipes?" he asked the man who had pointed out Scots' Ridge and Guards' Kopje to him.

"Smoke nothing but cigarettes, thank you, Sir," the soldier replied politely.

As the train pulled out at the sound of the whistle Rudyard Kipling got on board, not a pipeweight lighter.

The man to whom he had first offered a pipe hollered, as the train left the platform, "No clays here; bring a basket of meerschaums and we'll take them."

CHAPTER XXI.

THE ROUTINE OF A DAY.

IMPORTANT incidents on this line and in the camp were so few that officers and men alike found time heavy on their hands. To the war correspondents this was especially the case. The only beauty of the situation was, that work of the greatest importance might drop practically from the clouds, and move on a camp as fast as the ominous storms which flew from one part of the country to the other.

Yet from daylight till dark there was a lot to be done in camp—sometimes duties start before daylight, and again they are not concluded till after dark, so that to appreciate what went on in part, during a whole period of twenty-four hours, one must follow not only hours of sunlight, but also the dark watches of the night. Whatever be the order, come what might to the Canadians, they were sure to act as men who were there to faithfully represent the home and country they belonged to.

In the meantime let me introduce you to your Canadian soldier's home in Belmont, West Griqualand in S. A., where you can be with him for exactly twenty-four hours.

Go through one day as he does—not a bad life at all. Don't disturb him please, as the man from our Dominion needs his rest. Step into the tent. Hush—quietly—lie with your coat under your head for a pillow, and sleep in the most comfortable position which your weary bones can dig out for themselves in the light covering of dark red sand, and hard limestone ground. Now, you are in the middle of the night, and in the waking moments, which are generally very few, you can hear sentries call out through the night, "number one and all's well," then number two takes up the strain, and at the top of his voice again breaks the dark silence by proclaiming that all is well on his beat. On up to the man of number five guard, till the round is completed, and then silence, as before, reigns, while the whole camp has been audibly warned that everything is as it should be. Each hour throughout do the sentries sing that monotonous, but assuring song, and the improvised town bell at the station platform rings out the hour, and the sound of the heavy iron railway sleeper steals over the tents of quiet soldiers as the lonely sentry raps it with measured strokes, and then steps back to the guard-house to take his turn of rest. The men of Her Majesty sleep, wearied with the day's round of duties and fatigues, watched over on the Belmont veldt by the solemnly majestic kopjes, lighted dully by the millions of blinking stars that nightly fill the South African heavens.

Looking across the lines of tents, a graveyard could not be quieter. There is no light—there is seemingly no life, save here and there the dull glimmer of a candle in a guard tent. It's the soldier's time off duty, when the hours pass on without him, but he's ready if he's wanted just the same.

One by one the sinking stars go out, just before they encounter the first rays of the sun above the horizon, and before the great ball of light has appeared, even in part, over the near-by eastern hills, bringing color to the little station of soldiers, there is an air of life about. Tents that have all night been closely pegged down to keep out the heavy dew and the cool, clammy night air, are here and there astir. A kharki costumed soldier scrambles over the lower curtain and through the fastened flaps of the tent. He looks sleepily at the sky, consults his small bracelet watch, yawns. He thrusts his head into his own and comrades' sleeping apartment again, but there is not one awake. So he toddles to his post and stands erect. He is the lad who starts the soldier world to work—the bugler who tells Tommy when to toil. When he speaks out his brazen monosyllables, the whole camp hears; when he tells an army to proceed to death or victory it is done. He is the pet of every regiment, and already he has, single-handed, shot four Boers at a sitting in the campaign that is waging in the south, so he feels justified in making the others wake up. Here at Belmont,

as at every other garrison on the continent, the bugler is the first and last soldier regularly seen in camp.

One moment and *reveillé* sounds; another moment and the canvas roofs of the soldiers' shelters move, at first singly, then in lines. A whistle or a song in one, a puff of tobacco smoke or a hearty laugh in another, and in a short time men are busy around their primitive camp homes, getting ready for whatever is the day's first duty. They go for their buckets of water, and dabble like so many ducks; they enjoy their embryo bath, but, when water is scarce, they can do away with their morning ablutions, though not as readily as the Boers do. The orderlies (men who look after the rations) and the cooks are the then all-important men of the regiment, and, while the others take matters more leisurely, these soldiers are as busy as butchers on a market day. Fires to light, kettles to boil, coffee to make, men to feed. It is a busy beginning of a busy day. Butterless bread and hot beverages form the breakfast ration, but, can there be found a camp where there is not an "extra" in the form of jam, butter, milk, or some kind of canned meat?

The soldiers, and especially the colonials, have become used to supplementing their army supply, and they practically spend more in one day, buying extras at the canteen and village store, than their bare shilling's pay.

Once the morning meal is ready, there is little

formality displayed in consuming it. Squatted on their overcoats, kits or blankets, the men squeeze along the walls of the tent, and form a social circle, using their crude cutlery in most dexterous fashion. Their plates are their tin canteens or army lunch boxes, their cups and saucers are the lids of the canteen, and the knife and fork are, for the time, done away with, the places of these useful utensils being taken by the soldiers' clasp-knife, with a huge blade at one end and a dangerous looking spike at the other. For an all-round weapon and handy tool this tethered trophy cannot be beaten, but it really seems to be a treacherous affair to eat with. However, hunger makes a great difference with men at meal time, and these fighting forces could eat, if need be, with saw and hammer. These soldiers' jack-knives are issued to the men, and to prevent their losing them they are fastened around the neck with a white cord lanyard.

Having finished the coffee from the large iron pots and the butterless bread, together with whatever else is self-provided, the soldiers are ready to start on the round for the day.

Every other morning there is a march out for miles into the country, where all manner of military manœuvres are practised, principally the attack. There had been so many of these mimic fights that the Canadians longed for a big one in earnest. They had done their work well in rehearsal; they wanted their part in the real

play. They tramped through their drill with a steady swing, and distributed their forces as directed, and they had at the end captured every kopje they were told to take. No wonder they clamored to go to the front. After they had enfiladed the enemy, after they had stormed a summit, the rule was to turn and tread home. Back to Belmont before the heat of the day, the men are again in camp. All over the great common there is always work to do, and fatigue parties, thanks to the energy of the higher officers, are kept constantly on the move, cleaning up scraps of paper, shifting cars on the tracks, guarding the ammunition, digging trenches, and generally putting the place in order.

The sun soon steals to the zenith, and when the men's shadows are shortest is the time they prepare for the mid-day meal. More work for the cook and orderly, because dinner is the most pretentious repast of the day, for it is then, and then alone, that meat is taken from the Quartermaster's grand larder and given to the men. How the meat is prepared depends on the choice of the men and the proficiency of the cook. An issue of meat which is boiled by one cook would be tastily roasted by another, and the company that is blessed with the best cook and culinary department, is the one which will fare best at meal time. The preparation of the potatoes and soup for dinner also depends on the kitchen help, and though all these meals are made ready in the open air, it is astonishing in some cases, what

excellent dishes are prepared. The trouble is, the chances of eating dinner in comfort, are against all in camp, for the reason that in about nine cases out of ten, the words "sandstorm" and "dinner" are synonymous, in fact, they always seemed to be interchangeable.

Longing eyes have often looked at the good wholesome food brought hot from the cooking trenches, soldiers have glared into the meat pots before dinner time and have at once taken their places with their heels dug into the sand, with ration-tin in one hand and general utility knife in the other, ready to give the mid-day ration a rousing reception. There is a look of genuine satisfaction and contentment in the faces of the ravenous soldiers, each has his share served, talking ceases and jaws begin to work.

Dinner is finished practically when the dust storm blows in, and by the time it has blown out again the afternoon's work is ready to be started.

The afternoons are quiet and a tenacious, sultry heat settles over the long rows of tents, driving the men under canvas, where the commonest of common flies keep the air alive with their presence.

Sometimes the soldiers are spectators at miniature gladiatorial contests arranged between the native insects and bugs. For instance, a fight to a finish may be going on in one tent between a tarantula and a scorpion, and a bit farther down the line, perhaps there is an encouraged engagement between a "Hottentot God" and a "Devil's

Darning-Needle." This kind of amusement was not the ordinary by any means, but it made, at times, the dragging hours at Belmont move somewhat more quickly.

The sun, never hidden for an hour, always sends down his warmest greetings to the men in camp, and his daily afternoon work is kept up with more intensity and consistency than it is even on Niagara Common in camp time. Those of the men who are not for any kind of duty or fatigue put in, generally, an indolent time, and the lack of reading matter, makes the lethargic moments lengthen. All cannot rest in the afternoon, and there is always some kind of work for part of the regiment to do. So much had been done in building fortifications for Belmont, that that toilsome task was almost at an end, and the Canadians had almost as little new work to do as the negro boys who were employed in the transport branch of the Imperial service, and who, by the way, drew as much pay as most of the Non-commissioned officers. It was too hot to take much athletic exercise, but even if it were not, the sporting equipment sent from Canada for the regiment, was not there. It was just such a time as one would delight in taking a swim, but there was no water closer than three miles distant. A visit to a friend in hospital was a possible way of putting in part of the afternoon, as was also a couple of hours even thinking of snow and ice in Canada. So the afternoons dragged on till sundown, each day being the same as the one before, save for the

very few slight breaks in the chain of Belmont's uneventful time.

As the sun cast long, derisive glances over the western kopjes, the cooler air stirred itself and came in to take a little of the burden off the soldiers. It was the best time to work and the best time to drill, and for the route marches, which did not take place in the morning, that time of day had reasonably been chosen. The direction of the march was varied, but a march was always a little exercise, and when the men returned to camp, they were ready to eat, and early nightfall saw them with candles, huddled around the tents, taking the last meal provided for them during the day, consisting of just about the same ration that was issued for breakfast.

Night in the camp came with a strange weirdness, where phantom spooks searched for shelter. The soldiers toddled around in the dark, and, except that a guy-rope often tripped Tommy and made his presence easily known, he was a silent spectre between the lines. He was a ghost in black.

Out on the kopjes, where are constantly stationed the posts and patrols, night came with even more singular strangeness, where a heavy breath from a neighboring sentry put fear in the heart of many a soldier. The unyielding stones on the mountain reluctantly consented to become beds for the men who slept out in the open when they were doing kopje duty.

In camp the heavens at night appeared to be

kindly disposed, but out on the kopjes the delicate-faced moon seemed to infuse an unsympathetic look in her cohorts, the stars, and tried to give the soldiers as pallid a covering as possible.

Walk through the Canadian camp lines at night, and your feelings undergo quick changes. A chorus and laughter in one tent will give the idea that the men are feeling as happy as they would at home; in another, lots of loud talk and argumentative tone will impress one that final plans for the speedy termination of the war are being prepared by a few privates. Some person in the tent has positive opinions regarding the movements of the British army, and this future general is settling the South African trouble alone. Others in the same tent, who have been born to rule nations, almost put out the candle-in their gesticulating eagerness to show what should be done, having no attention whatever paid to them by the tired soldier who snores violently as he sleeps on his kit at the back of the tent. This section of soldiers is still carving out a staunch policy as we move down the line. As if to squeeze as much enjoyment as possible out of the last few moments of sputtering candle light, the debaters often make more noise and fewer points as time grows less, and "lights out" on the bugle in staccato notes follows "last post." The last long "g" of the call is slowly ended, and before the bugler has time to steady his swinging instrument the glim has been dowsed along the regiment's lines, making the tents stand

out in sepulchral fashion in the moonlight, where they had before stood prominent only by reason of the poor candles within them.

It is not nine o'clock yet, but the night, for the soldier, has officially started.

Stroll past the officers' tents, and lights are still going, though tallow candles, in many cases boasting of a glass lantern, perform the wonderful feat of eating themselves up.

It is a sociable place—an officer's quarters, especially at night, and there is generally an officer of another company or corps present paying his respects or borrowing some camp utensil. Tents that hold thirteen men will accommodate very easily from three to five officers, so that there is plenty of room for them to stretch themselves out on the Wolesley valise beds and enjoy whatever happens to be provided for their special delectation.

A sociable chat, a pipe of peace, a look at the orders, a few drooping eyelids, a waning of their caged candles, and night, even for the officers, is begun.

This was one day, and a typical day in Belmont.

CHAPTER XXII.

PICKED THE WINNER—BUT LOST.

"TWO to one on George Smith! Come on; anybody want a bet?" An Australian shouted this.

It was the day of the garrison sports at Belmont, and all the contests had narrowed down to tests of athletic ability between the Australians and Canadians, for there was no other regiment in camp that had any kind of chance to win against the athletes of the Queensland Mounted Infantry and the Royal Canadians.

It had been a great day and the primitive athletic field on the old limestone road that led to Richmond had been crowded with eager soldiers, competitors and on-lookers all day.

It was a gala day for all the regiments in garrison at the time. A regular fair-day on the veldt, no drills, no fatigues, everything given over to enjoyment. To the Australians went most of the laurels for they were undoubtedly the best athletes in camp; the Canadians came next, with the Munsters and others nowhere in sight.

Every person who had the shadow of a chance to win competed. They were there in all kinds of sporting regalia, from regular athletic suits to

half worn underwear and cut-off kharki uniforms. There was a varied lot of clothing worn that day.

The interest manifested in the events may be imagined from the fact that in the one hundred yards' race there were ninety-seven competitors; other numbers on the programme were equally well filled.

The Canadians' only first had been the obstacle race, but they had a dark horse for the long distance race, and one on whom they all counted for another win. He had been proved on many a long distance course before, and the Australians made no pretence at being able to win. So they asked our men who was calculated to win, and the Canadians told them.

He was the winner, if the Munsters did not come along with a world-beater. If they had had one all would have heard of it for they were never known to keep anything quiet.

The outsiders were always industrious in backing their favorites, and the Australians wagered any amount.

Now, Private D. was feeling in the best of spirits that day after his Christmas dinner and liquid refreshment of three weeks past, and he had heard that the long distance race was as good as guaranteed to the Canadians, but he did not know who the Canadian grey-hound was.

The Australians always bet to win, not from any loyal motive, consequently they willingly backed their individual choices. Thus it was that the Australian stood by the Canadian George Smith's chances with his gold.

"Two to one on George Smith!" he sung out again.

"I'll take that bet for a sovereign," said Private D., walking up to the mounted infantryman. "We have a Canadian who can beat him," and the wager was placed.

"How are our Canadian runner's chances?" Private D. asked some of the men of the regiment who stood some distance away.

"Good," said one, "can't beat him to-day, and he's fit," answered Private Banker, who was an enthusiastic horseman.

"Hey, there, Australia!" shouted Private D. with assurance, "I'll go you another pound."

"You're on," returned the Australian, and the second stake was posted.

All the way out to the top of Scots' Ridge, Smith lay well up in the bunch of runners, and when they turned on the homeward journey, he crept up and took the lead.

Private Banker rode out on a mule bareback to pace him in,—an easy winner.

The crowds watched the finish, and the Canadians yelled "Can't beat our man Smith! Smith wins!!"

Private D. was not able to understand these exclamations from Canadians. Why should they back an Australian? Nor did he fully realize his position and the loss of his golden sovereigns, till he met the winner that night, and knew him ever after as one of his companions-in-arms of the Royal Canadians.

CHAPTER XXIII.

FIRST FORCE IN THE FREE STATE.

ENOUGH has been said regarding the inactivity at Belmont, but like every other place it was not a place of perpetual rest or weariness. There were times when pleasant breaks made even old Belmont a camp not to be despised. There were days when the total changes put a new phase on all the surroundings and the men for awhile would begin to think that life was worth living even there.

Thanks to the season of the year there was little rain at Belmont, for, if gloomy weather had added its dispiriting effect, the soldiers' minds would have been more ill at ease than they were.

The sorties, under Lieut.-Col. Pilcher, served to greatly enliven the interest in the camp, and each company was most anxious to take part in them. "C" Company had had its little brush at Sunnyside and it was but natural for the others to look forward to the time when they would be given a chance.

Having proved such a successful affair the first time, the camp commandant decided to make another plunge after the Boers, the next week, and accordingly orders were issued late on Monday

night on January 8th that, of the Royal Canadians "A" Company (British Columbia and the North-West), "B" Company (London), and half of "H" Company (Halifax), were to be ready with other forces to move at 5.30 on the following morning. Consequently preparations were made for the march, rations were got ready, the men rolled their great coats, and filled their haversacks with whatever they wanted or could get in the way of extras. These, by the way, were generally few on occasions like this. A tin of jam was sometimes slipped in along with the hardtack, or a cake of chocolate, always a handy thing, might be put in the soldier's pocket, but bread, hardtack, and an overflowing water bottle were the mainstay of the men in the line of food.

The Canadians who were picked for this pilgrimage were up with the birds and after a hastily bolted meal were ready for the journey. The Canadian officers in charge of companies, were Lieut. Ross, Lieut. Mason, and Lieut. Layborn, with one hundred men; "A" Company, Capt. Arnold, Lieut. Blanchard, and Lieut. Hodgins, one hundred men; half of "H" Company under Lieut. Burstall and Lieut. Willis, fifty men; and two Canadian Maxim guns commanded by Lieut. Adjutant Ogilvy. "P" Battery, Royal Horse Artillery, one hundred Queensland Mounted Infantry, two companies of Cornwalls, twenty of the Munster Fusiliers, and the New South Wales Medical Corps with ambulance and stretcher-bearers, were also in the force. The other Cana-

dian officers on this outing, were Major Pelletier in command of the detachment R.C.R.I.; Major Denison, quartermaster; Lieut. Lafferty, transsport officer; Surgeon-Captain Fiset and Chaplain Almond.

By half-past six all were ready to start, and the procession wound its way out past the eastern kopjes of Belmont and to the road which led direct to the Orange Free State.

For the men it was fortunate that the day was a dull one and that there were clouds in the heavens to break the sun's fearful rays, but even on this gloomy morning the men before the halt, were marching with their helmets stuck on their bayonets and tired with three hours and a half of steady walking.

A rest was taken on the near side of a barbed wire fence; on the other side of it lay the Free State, with here almost an imaginary boundary line. A still dam of water at this point delighted in the name of Blaauwboschpan. While the rest of the force pushed on, "A" and "B" companies were ordered to remain there till three in the afternoon, and if they had not by that time been sent for and if they had not heard the artillery engaged, they were to turn back to Belmont, which they did and were safe at home again by half-past six in the evening.

The rest of the force went on and for the first time during the campaign, some of the Canadians at least were treading on the enemy's ground in the Orange Free State. The objective point was

the home of Commandant Lubbe, who was an enthusiastic Free State fighter, as might be gathered from the position which he held among his brethren in arms.

All along the line of march, the mounted scouts shot out to all sides and in front, keeping an eye on all the hills, rushing along as feelers to the flying force, which was making the best of it's time over the territory traversed. Hills and plains, kopje and veldt past one on to the other. Sometimes the level land is half a mile at a stretch, or it may be a dozen miles, often the kopje is fifty feet high, but more frequently it towers toward the heavens to four times that height. No flowers, no trees, prickly bushes, hot sand, no change—nothing to startle you; the only thing that is magnificently grand is the sky, and that is always new.

Never pausing for a moment, but going somewhat faster if anything, and with all eyes front, we could see over the rising ground ahead, the tops of tall slender trees, with a windmill nestled in the centre. This one green spot was Witdam farm, the home of the Orange Free State leader, who was very anxiously sought by the flying column.

Was Mein Herr Lubbe at home?

If he was we would come in and ask him to join the party for a while; if he was not we might as well step inside and rest a bit anyway.

All is fair in love and war, and as this sortie was no love conquest, it was surely not out of

place for the British to make themselves at home at the Boer's farm-house.

The lookout kept by Lubbe and his men must have been good, for the zealous scouts had got but within hailing distance of the place, when out and away on horseback flew the three last Boers from the house.

The burghers of the commando had just been holding a council of war, and the Kaffir servants had just prepared a bounteous meal for twenty or twenty-five people. There were joints and knuckles of veal and mutton, heaping dishes of rice and barley, and large boiling pots of tea and coffee. These, however, did not go to waste by any means, and if the officers' meal had been telegraphed ahead for, there could not have been a prompter service. The Boers had been unconsciously kind, and the British eagerly took advantage of this lavish display of eatables.

This was the second time in two weeks that the Boers had been disturbed, but the first time that British feet had gone after them into the Free State.

It was, of course, the first Free State residence we had seen, and it was interesting. The brick house was a model little structure for an Orange Free State farmer. The whole place was a comfortable, cool spot, and the negro servants seemed to beam with delight as they saw Her Majesty's men walk around and superintend operations, where just an hour before the Boer had held full sway. There had been a change in a twinkling,

and one that was pleasing to the farm help at least, for the Kaffir hates the Boer whom he serves so faithfully and well.

Neatly planted all around the well laid out little yard there were shade trees, mulberry bushes and pomegranate trees. Well built stone walls divided different enclosures, and behind the barn and hen-house, there stood a suite, as it were, of kraals on the sloping kopje, within a stone's throw of the house. A pan to the left, nicely shaded, had served as the best of watering places for Commandant Lubbe; now it accommodated the Colonials.

After the much-appreciated meal the officers sat around on the stone verandah in front of the house, and enjoyed the cool place doubly because of the contrast with the hot march just preceding it.

Trees in South Africa seem to take the place of American electric fans. A sultry breeze will blow its heated waves across the sand, meet a grove of tall trees, and pour out apparently all its existence for good and proceed on its career of hot-air baths. It leaves the essence of its life among the trees. Could one bring the Canadian trees in among the African breezes, no grander climatic conditions could exist the world over.

While the officers rested, the scouts searched the kopjes and pried into suspicious looking bends in the rock-covered hills. Almost as from the ground a Queenslander loomed up at half-past four, and reported to Col. Pilcher that the

enemy were in sight and in force beyond a large kopje just across the veldt. It appeared to be about two miles away, but on marching it it lengthened to twice the distance.

At this time the officers had just finished breaking the rifles and destroying the ammunition which the Boers had left. They were then quickly summoned by the officer commanding and told of the news which had arrived. At once the disposition of the small British force of two hundred and fifty men was made, with what little infantry we had, lined up ready to march off, when the further cheerful news came that we were surrounded. This message developed a morbid desire in one to look around, expecting at any moment a party of fierce looking Boers would sweep over any part of the circle of kopjes, and send in a whizzing whirlwind of death-dealing lead.

The men took their places and held their different positions as quickly as they could. There was no time to waste. The soldiers appreciated this fact, and as fast as they could disperse, they secured themselves in their stations and awaited developments.

The kopje where the Boers were most expected, lay on the far side of the veldt from the farm; here the Royal Horse Artillery took up a position on the right. To the left of the kopje the mounted infantry proceeded, while on each side of the farm and back of it, the two Canadian Maxims were stationed on the tops of small kopjes.

Half of "H" Company of the Canadians, all who were there, under Lieut. Willis supported the Maxims on the higher hill, the other section of the Halifax Company in charge of Lieut. Burstall was sent into the field to build light trenches, to be used in case of retreat.

I went up the middle of the field with the ambulance and stretcher-bearers, halting on the open about three miles away from, and in front of the farm. Every moment was one of suspense, till the big guns would start rolling in their rounds of shrapnel, but it was not to come.

The mounted scouts had gone far enough around the kopje to see the enemy more clearly, and imagine their surprise when they found out for sure that the advancing foe was none other than the Australian force of Victoria Mounted Rifles!

Another ten minutes, as an officer told me coming back over the field, and British would have been shelling British.

There was a good reason for taking the Victoria Mounted Rifles for Boers. They were on horses, they wore drooping slouch hats, grey uniforms and leather bandoliers. At more than a distance of five hundred yards, they are in appearance as much like Boers as the real burgher is.

The quick work of our mounted men in getting out and identifying them, no doubt saved a catastrophe, which would have been lamentable in the extreme.

Though the return to the farm, without action

was disappointing, there was rejoicing that no shot had been fired from either side, for then nothing could have averted the impending calamity. The Victorias, who were camped at Enslin, were out reconnoitering in that part of the country, which accounted for their presence near us.

Once back at Lubbe farm, preparations were made for supper, the men's rations being well supplemented with newly killed beef, and the officers enjoyed a savory meal, consisting for the most part, of fowl. One has more choice of food at a farm than in camp, and it is a soldier's prerogative to select the best he can. No tents, and an order to stay at Lubbe's for the night, so the men bivouaced. Great coats and the starry sky were their covering. Sand and limestone served them as beds, and anything from a water-bottle to a rock, sufficed for a pillow.

The " rouse " blared out next morning at four o'clock before the sun had risen, and with hasty preparations, the column was able to proceed by half-past six. The Belmont force went away in heavier order than they had come in, since they took with them from Lubbe's some twenty horses, about twenty-five head of cattle and all the contents of the Boer leader's house, from the stove and stove-pipes, to the articles which he had hidden in the ground in the yard. An ox-team of fourteen long-horned beasts was borrowed, together with an immense waggon well racked, to carry to camp what had been taken from the old Boer home.

All these goods to wind up the affair, were sold by auction at Belmont two days afterwards to the soldiers.

Having routed this band at Witdam farm another road back to Belmont was followed, and being a shorter cut to the camp, the return journey was accomplished in shorter time than it took to go out.

This acquaintance with Lubbe and his men was again renewed four months after when, on the far side of Thaba 'Nchu at Toba Mountain, fifty miles past Bloemfontein, the Boer commandant was taken prisoner on the first of May.

CHAPTER XXIV.

WHEN THE WEEKLY MAIL ARRIVED.

UNLESS there was some special attraction in the lines as night fell, the station platform at Belmont became the popular trysting place of the troops, and soon it was such a general rendezvous that the garrison police were given instructions to keep privates off this promenade in the evening. Needless to say, this suited the police, so much being added to their increasing authority.

The Munster Fusiliers made excellent embryo policemen in every way. They had a profound air of self-importance, the foundations of a rotund corporation, an air of proprietorship, and an unexcelled accent. It was a pleasure, indeed, when a sixteen year old Munster could come up to a strapping Canadian and (by reason of his police badge alone), order the Colonial off the platform. Then would the young Irishman, with a complacent smile playing over the vast extent of his upper lip, strut more authoritatively up and down in front of the depot, apparently a diminutive monarch of all he surveyed. His plump little chest would swell and threaten the brass buttons on his tunic, his short cropped head would twitch convulsively, and he was satisfied.

When the mail was expected, there was of

course, a greater crush of men to be handled than on other nights, and the police, armed with their improvised batons made of broom handles and Kaffir sticks, were in their element, tapping men on the shoulders and warning them to keep a respectful distance from the sacred ground which was prohibited.

The two chums of the city regiment, who by that time were inseparable, were right up in the front row anxious to see the canvas mail bag thrown out from the guard's van as the train came in.

"Phat doo yous waant, shtandin' up in reserved seat places loike a brace av 'ristochrats?" asked a chunky little Fusilier as he strolled by, with his "G. P." badge turned to the crowd.

"Mail," answered one of the chums.

"Its' a lot of mail yous wallops 'll get I'll tell yous, fallurigatin' around here. Off to yur loines or th' Provost Sargint will be th' furst man te see yous in the morning.

"You're too impertinent and over-bearing," answered the other companion, as the two stepped back.

"Wan more worrd of bad langwidge loike that," threatened the juvenile policeman, "and oi'll lock both of yous up for profanity," and as he shook his stick, he resumed his beat.

Presently the Police Corporal came on duty at the station and had at once to deal with one of his own men. Then there was a real Irish duel, fought at short range with words.

"Casey!" yelled the Police Corporal, "phat are you doin' on this platform?"

"Walkin' up an' down," answered the Private, "asein' me legs a bit afther bein' cocked up loike a jack rabbit on that harse of mine."

"Yez have no roit here, so hi wid yer banty shins," the Corporal said testily.

"Well thin oi'll — — shtay here," was the reply.

"Oi've been a Corporal for thirteen years and oi'll take no such palaver from your breed," uttered the Corporal walking over to the Private, showing the badge of authority conspicuously.

"Oi beg paardon, Corporal, I didn't see that you was wan of the guvernors av Bilmont. Oi procrastinate and oi'm very subjunctive."

"Phat would be th' nature of your business aanyway, Casey?" enquired the Corporal after the humble apology had been given.

"Oi expect a letter, Corporal — — but—I don't expect I'll get wan," was the melancholy answer that set the officers laughing as he moved away; and the headlight of the engine hove in sight through the sand cut a mile below the station.

CHAPTER XXV.

A MOVE THAT WAS SHORTLY STOPPED.

GOOD news travelled through camp almost as quickly as bad news and it was not long being circulated late on Friday night, February 2nd, that orders had come for the regiment to start for the front next day.

There was general rejoicing thoughout the Canadian lines. The long expected order had come, and the men of the Dominion scarcely knew how to contain their unbounded joy. How long they had waited for that glad message to move only those who were with them all the time in the Belmont garrison knew, and how they had hoped to soon get away from the environment of Scots' Ridge and Kaffir Kopje, only the men themselves understood. Now their hearts' wishes had been satisfied and there was no "growsing." Their unfeigned eagerness to be at the real front was clearly demonstrated, and they were ready.

There were so many regiments from far distant places that had to be transported by rail, that the Canadians were given marching orders to Modder River, and with all speed the available companies of the Royal Canadian Regiment were hurried off, the start being made on Saturday afternoon.

Gras Pan, seven miles north, was to have been the place for the first stop, and proved also to be the place for the last stop. It was a comfortable camp, but the break in the onward move was a disappointment. One beauty of war is, that it helps a man to take all surprises of whatever kind more serenely than he probably would at home.

The order in this case was to proceed to Modder River station, thirty-five miles north on the railway, and to time the march so as to arrive there on Monday. In this case, though they may have been out of order, the Canadians did a little thinking, and were of opinion, as opinions went there, that they were bound for "Modder," as the place where Lord Methuen's forces were stationed was shortly called. The ox-trains had all the Canadian luggage they could carry, and blundered along the road to Gras Pan according to the orthodox style of the oxen of South Africa. Oxen have much of the slow tortoise gait with them, but they plod disconsolately along and make good average time. They do not kick over the traces like the mules, nor do they make the encouraging sprints so often indulged in by these braying brutes, but they can transport loads which would try the strength of elephants. All three of the Canadian transport waggons were drawn by oxen, while mules were used on the two ammunition carts and water carts. Whatever else has to be left behind, the water cart must be in a prominent place during the whole

performance, for as yet the wonderful army regulations have failed to devise a scheme to prevent men from becoming thirsty.

Gras Pan being the first mile-stone, as it were, on the journey, the men were soon at that camp. Here the "Gay Gordons" were stationed, and as a kindly compliment to our men, the Highlanders, when they saw them coming, sent a brawny piper a mile down the road to escort the Canadians to the camp. It is not every person who likes the twirling twang of the bagpipes, but there was not a man of the Royal Canadians who did not brace up and strut into the new camp as proud and as pompous as if he were a highborn Scot. It was just at the first shadow of sundown, when the soldiers were met by the Dargai delegate and led into Gras Pan.

The march was made by but three companies of our men, though it was nominally a move of the whole regiment. "A" and "G" companies were out on a western sortie to Richmond, where there was little to do but carry stones up kopjes for fortification purposes. "D" and "F" companies were already stationed a short distance from Gras Pan on the Belmont side of the camp, while "B" Company remained at Belmont as a garrison company, "E," "C" and "H" companies being therefore the ones who took the trip on foot. There was darkness when the Canadians arrived at the neat little camp, but there was, indeed, true brightness in the reception which they received at the hands of the

Highlanders. Officers, non-commissioned officers and men, were almost literally carried away by their new hosts during the latter's endeavor to make the Colonials feel at home.

The Gordons had had their varied share of new experiences; they had come to new countries and climates; they had fought and won, fought and lost, and the profit of all this was given to the men from Canada, who were stumbling into a new home. A cordial welcome to the camp by these Scottish regulars kindled the hearts of the Canadian privates, and before our men lay down to bivouac, there were Gordons gallavanting with Canadians, and men of our country craning their necks with Gordons. Our officers likewise had beds of roses prepared by the officers of the regular regiment, and were taken into the Gordon officers' mess and treated royally.

This first halt was a pleasant one and the men who left Belmont thought that they were greatly blessed by being at Gras Pan; so they were. At last, lights were out in the Gordons' tents, but the Canadian tents were not yet pitched, so sleep in the open was the order, out under the dome of heaven where, on starry nights, lights are never out.

When soldiers sleep under cover of a great coat without tents there is seldom any need next morning for either *reveillé* or the rouse to be sounded. They wake themselves with a slight assistance from the sun. At times a heavy thunder shower or a sandstorm may wake the

soldiers in the dead of night, but nothing short of that has any effect.

Early enough on Sunday the men were up, and again the Gordons and Canadians were arm in arm. Then the Gordon officers sent word that their men had volunteered and wanted to pitch the tents of the Canadians. The offer was accepted, and accordingly the skirted soldiers went to work with a will, and harnessed the homes of the Royal Canadian regiment into shape. The large bathing tank was placed at the disposal of our regiment, and the men took a much enjoyed and well needed splash in the water, and though the Gordons did not actually stand, towel and sponge in hand to rub them down and dry them, they were there.

By daylight the Gras Pan camp was an ideal ground from nearly every standpoint. Excellent wells supplied the best of water, and the members of the regiment drank enough of it to make themselves almost sick, but good water was then such a luxury that the sight of a large clear sparkling well was one of the most appreciated of the country.

All over the camp ground the laddies' lines were laid out in systematic style and in such a trim way as to make one wonder whether these soldiers were occupying an old established parade ground or a passing camp but a few miles from the enemy. Around the tents, on the plain smooth ground, rows of white limestones were artistically arranged, and in such a neat way as to make the Gordons' lines the envy of our men.

Once the example was in front of them the Canadians were not long in getting to work to make their own quarters as attractive as those of the people next door. Our regiment always had a certain artistic sense of things, and soon the Canadian tents were tastefully surrounded with paths and walks as elaborate as those of the Gordon Highlanders, but since the volunteer soldiers and the professional fighters were such good friends, neither one arrangement of the camp nor the other could be claimed as the better. The Gordons pleaded that the Canadians had a nicer looking place and our men insisted that the Dargai heroes held the palm. There was a disagreement but no quarrel. It was a mutual admiration society for the time being.

Having been told to await further orders, the regiment was busy all the day fixing up the camp, and by nightfall the improvement in the appearance of the place was phenomenal.

During the whole day troops marching overland from Orange River and points south passed Gras Pan camp on their way to Modder River. Two troops of the dashing Scots' Greys, had with them Capt. Forester, who had but time to pause for a few moments with the officers and then gallop away with his new regiment in true hunting fashion over the veldt. After the Scots' Greys went past, the Norfolks and a battery of Royal Horse Artillery, also jaunted north to the front. A busy Sunday, with no services, put the week rather out of joint, for up to that time the

Sabbaths had nearly all been marked by the holding of devotional exercises; but even outward manifestations of religion must be put in the back ground when the stern business of war occupies all the time of the corps.

On Monday, the two sets of soldiers were as old friends who had been separated for years, and there were few tents in the Gordons' lines where a Canadian could not be found, while just as sparse were the R. C. R. shelters that did not cover a Highlander.

The regiments tried their hands, or feet, at Association football, and although the Gordons courteously allowed our men to score the first goal, they were not so lenient again. In the Gordons' favor the score ended four to one.

The last morning of the last day at Gras Pan broke beautifully clear, though what it had in brightness it lacked in coolness. The men were still busy putting their tents in order when a message came from Belmont to be ready to move back there as soon as relieving companies arrived at Gras Pan. Though the Canadians' mallets were in the air, they left them there and stopped work at once, with no further desire to beautify the place. It was "glad to meet, sorry to part and glad to meet again," for at once six other companies of the first Gordons, who had been encamped at Enslin a few miles north, marched in, and picking up the other men of their regiment, proceeded four miles south to "Maple Leaf camp," which a party of Canadians on duty there had christened some weeks before.

A cheer from the Canadians, one in return from the skirted soldiers—and the Gras Pan game was concluded.

The Cheshires clattered in and clustered around the camp, and with their arrival the Canadians took their departure.

The return journey of the regiment was begun about six o'clock, and long after the little "Big Ben" on Belmont's platform had sounded nine times, the former inhabitants of the garrison were back on the old battle field for the night bivouac. The march down in the cool of the evening was a pleasant one, and the men enjoyed the journey in the moonlight better than they had the tramping under the hot sun. They took as their path the Cape Government railway track, and as the regiment's three companies swung down, they passed in the silvery brightness in turn the Gloucesters and the Staffords going north.

"Wot lot's this?" the Englishmen would enquire as they approached our men, and when they received the answer, "Canadians," they would shout out, "You chaps are all right. Three cheers for the Canadians." Rousing cheers rang from the regulars as our troops tramped by, and in turn the lusty voices from the soldiers of our battalion gave the more seasoned fighters an ovation.

Troops that pass this way marching in the night have the same impressive solemnity about them that ships have under these circumstances.

Two columns of dust moving in opposite directions in the moonlight, heavy tramping of feet, helmets swaying up and down with each step of the different regiments, a meeting, a glistening of rifles and side-arms, vociferous cheering, and the bodies of comrades-in-arms have passed each other, to meet, perhaps, in some camp or garrison of the future, to be together again perchance on the battlefield, but more likely to be separated from that moment for all time.

Once again back to Belmont it seemed like home and old times, and though the men had been away but three days, they began to ask the others what had taken place while they were at the front (?).

When "D" and "F" companies were ordered back from near Gras Pan to Belmont, Lieut. Swift of "E" Company, who was then attached to "D" Company, noticed a train dashing down the railway line, and thinking there was no need to walk the men when a conveyance was handy, decided to "hold up" the steam transport. Ably seconded by Capt. Maynard Rogers, of "D" Company, a plan was decided on. The soldiers were warned to place their belongings in convenient places along the railway line, close to the cars. On being signalled the engine stopped, and the men with their baggage piled in.

It was Lieut.-Col. Girouard's train, and he came out at once to see what the trouble was. Lieut. Swift, not knowing the celebrated Canadian Director-General of Railways, argued the

case with him. It would have prolonged the stop if the men had been allowed to detrain, and the question was therefore settled in favor of the Canadians, who had seized an opportunity and who rode back to Belmont.

CHAPTER XXVI.

LORD ROBERTS' FIRST VISIT.

THERE was an unexpected visit paid to Belmont on Thursday, February 8th. No preparations had been made for it, and consequently the informality of the event made it more remarkable. The soldiers of the different regiments were trading stories or spinning wonderful yarns, some talking of wild experiences in India or the Soudan and the Canadians keeping their end up with marvellous tales of the North American continent, where few of the regulars had ever been.

"Hi was wi' Lo'd Rob'ts from Kabul to Khandahar, hand a jolly fine march it was, too, along o' them black natives," boasted one veteran of three campaigns.

"That's nothing," put in the North-West Corporal, who was one of the inattentive listeners, "we had to fight hundreds of tribes of wild Indians in Canada in '85. Not these ordinary black Indians like sells grapes here, but them with the hair down their back, and tomahawks at their belts, and real fire in their eye, and many a poor soldier I see scalped alive, and still he'd want to fight." Encouraged by the interest the Tommies took in his exaggerated narrative, he went on. "One day they scalped 5,000 ——— "

"That there's a bit thick, pal," broke in a soldier who discredited the last statement, "but I'll tell you a stunner, wot 'appened wi' our lot w'en we was wi' Kitchener to Khartoum."

"Oos it about?" queried the Khandahar hero. "The 'ead 'bloke' 'iself?"

"No, this ain't about no bloke at all, it's a bit o' fightin' has I 'ad alone—me an' the lad oo was my right 'and man."

The party of prevaricating raconteurs did not notice the sudden approach of a fast bound special train as it glided into the Belmont station.

One of the men chanced to look around, and noticing the long dining car at the end of the train and a few turbaned Indian servants smoking on the back platform, said to the others: "Somethink his hup, mates, them carriages ain't for no or'nary lot."

Forgetting their stories, they all made a move for the station platform, and as the Field-Marshal Commander-in-Chief of the British forces in South Africa stepped from the train with his chief of staff and other staff officers, there was indeed an astonished look on the faces of the men.

"Gawd bless my eyes!" exclaimed the Khandahar soldier, "hit's Lo'd Rob'ts 'iself!"

"*Hand* Lo'd Kitchener," said the Soudan fighter, catching a glimpse of Lord Roberts' chief staff officer, who walked beside the Field Marshal.

"There's a fine pair on 'em, pard," said the

former. "Cronje 'll be glad to meet them blokes wen they gets up to the front and starts pumpin' lyddite pills into them Dutch devils."

"Right," answered his partner, "and you can rub up your boots a bit, too, wi' a snip of candle, for you'll need 'em if Lo'd Kitchener has much to say to it," and he looked at his own sun-dried footwear.

"Wot ho!" ejaculated one of the others standing around, "there's that young Canadian railway horficer, Girryward, wi' the heye-glass," as he tried to get his tongue around the name of Col. Girouard, who was then making his way out of the end of the car.

True enough, they were all there, well known to the older men of the army and seen for the first time by the younger men of the Canadian Contingent.

Lord Roberts and Lord Kitchener walked side by side, as they strolled up and down the platform conversing with Lieut.-Col. Rockford Boyd, the camp commandant, and Lieut.-Col. Otter.

Lord Roberts, neatly attired in kharki uniform, wearing a wide helmet and no rank badges whatever, looked indeed small, with his five feet six inches, as Lord Kitchener's six feet and inches to spare, towered above him.

The Canadian guard at the station was inspected, and the Commander-in-Chief thought that the bandoliers worn by our men were not a good kind, since they left the brass ends of the cartridges exposed. He suggested that new ones

should be sent up, or that covers for the old ones should be procured. General Kitchener, with his massive frame, noticeably stooped shoulders, and determined, set face, strode with the party from end to end of the platform, taking in everything through his monocle, while Lord Roberts seemed too much engrossed in conversation to pay much attention to what was going on around him. Camera fiends popped up here and there, and shoved their blinking little instruments as close as it was safe to the great generals, and whether sun favored them or whether kodaks were properly focussed or not, they snapped away in all directions.

Some of the Canadian officers who were on the platform at the time, were there without their cameras, and such a shame! However, they rushed back to their tents to get the photographic apparatus, ready to commence action; but unfortunately, they were too late, and Lord Roberts could not hold his special train till they got back. There was a little more pressing work to do at Modder River, and consequently a few were not able to take pictures.

There was a hasty good-bye bid to the Belmont leading officers, the Field-Marshal and his staff boarded the train, and were soon whirling fast on their way to Modder River for the first time during the campaign.

"Now we'll have a chance," was the general thought in the Canadians' minds, and sure enough it came.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE FIRST OF THE MIGHTY MARCH.

LORD ROBERTS had visited Belmont on Thursday; the next Monday the Royal Canadians were with his forces on the way to Bloemfontein.

The welcome and authoritative news came, that the Canadians were to be at once brigaded with the Gordon Highlanders, the 2nd Duke of Cornwall Light Infantry, and the Shropshire Light Infantry, that they were to form the 19th Brigade under Maj.-Gen. Smith Dorrien, and together with the Highland Brigade to form part of the 9th Division.

On Sunday, February 11th, the General commanding the brigade came down from the north and the regiment was on parade ready for inspection.

Physically the men were fit, but with regard to clothing they were in a sad plight. There had been no new issue of kharki since the soldiers were supplied on boat, and the work around the different camps had told seriously on their uniforms.

Such a scraping and polishing and cleaning as the men's weapons and clothes underwent that

day would be hard for one who was not there to imagine. Soldiers who never knew what the feel of a needle was were busy doing their own tailoring and mending; buttons that were grimy with sand shone with a brilliancy hitherto unknown, and rifles that had lain rusting for weeks were oiled and polished with the greatest care.

Every man on parade looked every inch a soldier, and realizing the importance of this Sabbath inspection, each did his best to uphold the pride and honor of the country which sent him.

The General rode slowly down the ranks, and closely scrutinizing the men paid careful attention to every detail, but the men had done the same before him, and there was therefore no fault to be found.

He was particularly struck with the physique of the Canadians, and ventured that their average height must have been five feet nine inches.

When he had been satisfied with the parade, he ordered the attack to be gone through, and once again the volunteer regiment, used to it by that time, assailed a given position to the great satisfaction of the Brigadier.

At the conclusion of the movements the General said he was pleased in the extreme with the physique of the men, their steadiness in the ranks and their movements as a battalion, and that he was glad to be able to compliment them on the way the commands had been passed along the firing line. He was, he said, glad to have the Royal Canadian Regiment in his command.

The regiment had acquitted itself nobly and the long looked for reward came the next day, when Belmont was bid good-bye forever, and the men of our Dominion had gained the place they had come for, at the side of the regiments of the Imperial army, ready to fight and not afraid to die.

Tents on the camp ground the next day faded as the mist, and the new canvas shelters, which had done duty on Niagara common in Canada the summer before, were soon stored in the dingy old barns of Belmont.

The last parade at Belmont was held on the afternoon of February 12th when the soldiers were marched down in companies to the open trucks in waiting for them. They piled in without hesitation, and with ringing cheers and the singing of "The Girl I left behind Me," they were hurried seven miles up the line to the point of mobilization of their brigade at Gras Pan.

There there was no tedious wait, for the next day they were off over the veldt to take part in the greatest military march of modern times, lasting, as it did, one month. The regiment was within one of being 900 strong when it left Belmont, and two were left behind as the brigade started from Gras Pan.

There will be enough heavy marching farther on, and since the toilsome "trek" was generally the same in all cases, I shall hurry over the first week on the veldt and mention only the stops and the distances.

The direction taken on the first day was east and slightly north, to the bivouac for the night, Rawdam, some fourteen miles away. The great move had begun in earnest, and the soldiers at once began to appreciate the worth of a drink of water while plodding under the burning sun. At Rawdam they herded like cattle to a watering place and drank greedily like so many lower animals. One other member of the regiment was left behind here.

The next day a shorter march of twelve miles brought the brigade to the Riet river, and the halt was made at Watervaal Drift due east, where six men dropped out. The direction was then changed and a northerly route of nine miles in the early morning of Thursday, saw the Canadians at Wegdrei Drift. It was but a little exercise walk that they took, when they covered late on Friday the scanty four miles to Jacobsdahl, a hot-bed of Dutch sympathy. No stand was made to speak of at Jacobsdahl, and a couple of shells, as a warning of what might come later, served to scare out the Boer invaders. Those who could possibly go into the Dutch village searched the town for supplies, and a war correspondent, who was able to bring back to the camp lines a couple of tins of salmon and half a dozen of bottled beer, was the most popular man in the regiment. Soldiers he did not know before, flocked around him by the dozen, ready to share in his good fortune.

The Dutch Reformed Church was turned into

a hospital, and several other buildings afterward sheltered the sick. After Paardeberg, Boer and Briton were treated alike there when they were brought back suffering, and here it was, later (March 2nd), that Private John Adams, of "B" Company, was buried in the little village cemetery by Chaplain Almond.

On Friday night the troops started to Klip Drift, fourteen miles of hard marching having to be done before their destination was reached. Five men had to leave the Canadian ranks here, and Lieut. Blanchard dropped out on account of a bad leg.

When the men, anxious for a much-needed rest, were making preparations for it on Saturday night, the order came to proceed. It was intimated that the length of this march was to be fourteen miles, but like most others, it lengthened, and when the men had been going all through the night, for twelve hours and a half, till early morning, the stretch measured twenty-two miles.

It was about a quarter to six in the evening when that forced night march started, and it was a quarter after six the next morning when the men, terribly fatigued, sat down, practically on the banks of the Modder River.

When rest is within the grasp of a tired man, what a melancholy sound is the order which commands him to start and march on all night! There was not a fresh man in the regiment, but to one and all alike came the mandate that the march must be made. As the sun was setting

the men began the tedious and apparently never-ending trial, which was hourly bringing them closer to the confines of the enemy and taking some of the Royal Canadians to their first and last battle. Apparently as a symbol of the next day's battle, the sun was dyed a deep blood red, and with its last rays painted the whole sky with a sanguinary hue. It was the foreboding of a bloody engagement.

The shade of the heretofore absent trees made a peaceful resting place for the men, and here on that memorable Sabbath morning they lay down.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

PAARDEBERG.

COMPARED with the regiment that had landed at Cape Town 1,039 strong, there was a great change in the Canadians on the morning of that first Paardeberg fight when the battalion was but 872 strong.

Some had died, others were ill, and not a few had been transferred to other duties or different corps.

Changes had, of course, been made in many of the companies, but on that eventful Sunday the companies were officered as follows :—

"A" Company—Capt. Arnold, Lieut. Hodgins.

"B" Company—Lieut. Ross, Lieut. Mason, Lieut. Lafferty.

"C" Company—Capt. Barker, Lieut. Marshall, Lieut. Wilkie.

"D" Company—Capt. Rogers, Lieut. Lawless, Lieut. Stewart.

"E" Company—Capt. Fraser, Lieut. Armstrong, Lieut. Swift.

"F" Company—Capt. Peletier, Lieut. Leduc, Lieut. Peletier.

"G" Company—Lieut. Macdonnell, Lieut. Jones, Lieut. Kaye, Lieut. McLean.

"H" Company—Capt. Stairs, Lieut. Oland.

Lieut.-Col. Otter was in command, with Majors Buchan and Pelletier; Lieut. Ogilvy, adjutant; Capt. Weeks, quartermaster; Surgeon-Major Wilson and Surgeon-Capt. Fiset, surgeons; Rev. Father O'Leary, chaplain; Capt. F. J. Dixon, historical recorder; Capt. Bell, in charge of the Maxim guns; and Lieut. Caldwell, in command of the signallers.

The other officers were accounted for in this way:—The other two chaplains, Rev. Mr. Fullerton (Presbyterian) and Rev. Mr. Almond, were to stay on the line of communication till the regiment again reached the railway; Lieut. Blanchard, "A" Company, was at Klip Drift, incapacitated by reason of a sprained tendon; Lieuts. Blanchard and Willis, "H" Company, were both suffering from fever; Lieut. Panet, "F" Company, had gone to join the Second Contingent, where he was captain of artillery; Lieut. Temple, "B" Company, was on his way from Cape Town, where he was attending to regimental business; Capt. Stewart, "B" Company, was at Cape Town in charge of the Canadian base; Major Macdougall was employed in the railway transport department at Cape Town; Lieut. Layborn had become quartermaster in a mounted infantry corps; and Major Denison was A.D.C. on Lord Roberts' personal staff.

The clump of trees where the men lay down was a haven which granted them a resting-place for but a short time, and the relaxation from fatigue, which they had all been following like a

pot of gold at the rainbow's end, was still further from their grasp than ever.

A ripple of rifle fire could be heard ahead as some of the men managed to get from the cooks a biscuit and a little coffee, but when the sound of big guns shook the air, there came with it the order to move. Not all the men by any means were given the opportunity of getting hard tack and coffee, but there was time enough to fortify the soldiers with a ration of rum, which was a welcome stimulant.

At first the Canadians took position on a low ridge near the river's bank and then it was decided to send them through the river, on the farther side of which the fighting of the day was to be done.

Deep dongas, caused by the washing away of the earth in rain time, were spread far and wide on the river sides, and farther north supplied the Boers with the best of trenches flush with the ground. The muddy Modder, swollen as it was by recent rains, gurgled over the huge, rough stones which abounded at the bottom of it, and flowed at a rapid rate, fast enough in the swifter currents to take a man off his feet. Ropes had, in places, been stretched from one bank to the other, by means of which the crossing of the treacherous stream was more easily effected by the soldiers. With their rifles held high, and valuables in their helmets above the water, the Canadians plunged into the fast-flowing coffee-colored water, and gained the far shore with water up to their chins and necks.

Drenched to the skin they started to ascend the sloping banks of the river, and, once they had gained the level, they could see to the right of them the open plain which was so soon to form the historic battlefield of Paardeberg.

In front of the regiment there was an undulating bare plateau, with a few trees in places reaching out from the small grove fringes on the river banks, and here and there a bush dotted in the sand. Close to the place where our men crossed the river, and on the plain they were entering, stood a small circular kopje which had allowed our soldiers to cross unseen by the Boers; and to the left, as the British began to advance along the plain parallel to the river was Paardeberg, a fair sized kopje that commanded an excellent view of both contending armies.

The British ground on this side of the river was bounded by the river on the right, which here flowed north and south, and on the left by the high ground and kopje.

The river where the Boers were ensconced turned westward at the end of the battlefield, and running south-west from it, was a donga, which afforded excellent shelter for them. In this way they had a part cordon around any final British advance which might be undertaken, and from this position they were able to enfilade those who got far enough up in the field.

After the crossing of the river, which was completed shortly after 9 o'clock, the hot rays of the sun began to steam on the soldiers' kharki

clothes, and they moved on in so many apparently smouldering units.

Once across the river their turn to the right led them in the direction they had to follow all day.

The training they had received at Belmont was at once put to use, and the companies went on the field extended at ten paces interval between each man. "A" led, followed in turn by "C," "D" and "E," then came "B" and "G" in support, with "F" and "H" forming the reserves. Each company covered the width of the battalion, and properly extended they were mere dots on the veldt, with one man no better target than the other.

With regard to the 19th Brigade, the Canadians were on the extreme right. The Cornwalls had two companies in support of the battery of artillery far to the left of the British ground, over on the ridge, where was also placed the Canadian Maxim gun. The Shropshires were the Canadians' left-hand battalion, and later in the day the Gordons were also doing yeoman service on the left.

The Canadians — for we must follow them alone now—advanced as far as it was deemed safe and then crawling, they began what was a more onerous and tedious advance,—though in the most expedient way. Where the ground before, from a distance, had seemed practically level, it was now found with a few folds in it, running parallel with the Boer trenches. These

were heaven sent breaks in the earth's flat surface, for, although they had seemed trivial, they were enough to hide the advancing regiment and to save the lives of the men who crouched behind them.

Zzz - Zzz - Zzz - Zzz-Zz the bullets from the Martini-Henri rifles first buzzed, like lightning humming-birds, over the heads of the front rows of Col. Otter's men, as those horrible well-aimed missiles came in abundance from the Boer marksmen. There the first of the Canadians were hit, at a distance of 1500 yards, when they showed their forms above the top of this rise of ground, and came, for the first time, under fire. Soon, as the men crept up, as best they could, keeping cover wherever there was the slightest possibility, they began to hear the whistling ring of that excellent weapon, the Mauser rifle and carbine. Its report sounds just like a short exclamatory whistle that a person would use in the course of conversation.

Then again there was the whip-like crack of the explosive bullets, which the enemy used at times on that occasion. It was a queer mixture of marvellous sounds, as those slugs of lead were sent on their deadly mission, and no doubt the Dutchmen in their trenches, were subjected to the same moral effect from our men's steady aim at the fringe of trees ahead of them. Upon the hill to the left, Capt. Bell was having a little target practice with his single Maxim, which had been brought across the river, and the splashing

rip of the quick-firing machine was a sort of consolation to our men. The wheel of one of the Maxims was broken on the far side of the river and it had to be left over there for the time being.

The long drawn out "boom-boom" of the big guns on the other side of the river, which the Boers were bringing to play on the British, seemed to be the backbone of all the heavy fire and to sustain the persistent rifle fire which was being sent from the trenches. What an aggravation it was to be continually fired at and still be unable to definitely locate the shooters! There in the shade of the trees and piled up branches the Boers were able to look over the whole British field, and still the attackers could not see the Dutch riflemen, who so calmly lay in wait for them.

An hour before noon both our flanks were thrown forward, with the centre resting, so that the Canadians' left came closer to the Boer donga, and the right shifted more to the river and the trees which skirted the bank. Then the supports crawled up cautiously and added their strength to the firing-line. New life was added to the front lines, and with here a sally to a piece of cover farther forward, and there a dash to some favorable ground in front, the whole firing line advanced to within, at the farthest, 700 yards of the enemy, the left creeping towards the donga, the centre looking square at the Boer trenches and the right out into the

clusters of trees on the high bank of the Modder. But this advance was not taken without the loss of life, for Royal Canadians dropped in every rush. The stretcher-bearers were kept busy attending to the wounded, where any chance was offered, and while this courageous section paid attention to disabled men and dying soldiers, the Boers paid marked attention to them. In one case, that where Capt. Arnold was being carried off the field, three of four stretcher-bearers were hit while they bore him to the back of the lines.

Clumps of bushes and trees, instead of being any kind of protection, were the most dangerous places for men to go to, for, as if by actual measurement, the Boers had the range to a nicety. It was at one of these innocent-looking traps that Capt. Arnold, of "A" Company, received his mortal wound in the forehead while searching the enemy's position with his field glasses, and here also did a couple of privates die as soon as they had reached the fated spot. Private Findlay, of "C" Company, the first Canadian killed, fell shot through the heart at the spot where the "A" Company leader made his last stand.

There was no way that the Canadians could find the exact range, because they could not see where their shots fell among the trenches, but for the Boer it was different. One shot, and a puff of sand would give him an idea of how near he was to his mark and a slight adjustment of his rifle-sight would give him an exact range.

How dear that day were the ant hills that the men had before on the march cursed for being in the way; and how welcome were a few stones for cover, that had formerly tripped them while on the trek! Everything that could hide even a part of a Canadian body was taken advantage of. In fact, for the slight opportunities of cover they had, the Canadians fought more after the fashion of the Boers than any other regiment I saw in South Africa. The Boers know best of any how to fight through that country, and the Royal Canadian Regiment at least, followed his example as closely as they could.

During the early part of the engagement Col. Otter went up between "A" and "C" companies, and later commanded the regiment from where he could see best, in rear of the farthest back Canadians of the firing line, standing up when necessary, in every way a good leader under fire.

Major Buchan had a party of attentive and painstaking Boers continually firing at the ant hill behind which he was "cached" for hours, without a chance to move, while farther back Major Pelletier was busy with the supports. Other officers had to command whatever detachments of soldiers were nearest to them, for they were scattered all along the field and by that time greatly mixed up with other regiments' men.

Some of the braver Boers had the courage to climb up in the trees near their trenches, so that

they could better command a view of the field. One sharpshooter, with his feet firm in the crotch of a tree, fastened himself there with a belt around his chest, so that he could shoot, as occasion demanded, either right-handed or left-handed. He was noticed by an accurate firing section, and one of the best Canadian shots was told to fire at him.

"Did you hit him?" asked the Captain from behind an ant hill.

"I think so, Sir," the man replied, "but he doesn't seem to drop."

"Try another crack at him," the Captain yelled over, anxiously, "I think the devil is firing at us."

Bang went another report of the Lee-Enfield, and still the Boer stood in the tree.

"Have the section put a volley into him," the Captain ordered, and as many of the section as were there, let fly a volley, but the Boer never moved.

"Cronje must have him there as a scarecrow," said the Captain as the men again turned their attention to the trenches.

Meanwhile Capt. Bell's Maxim gun section had noticed the brave Dutchman and they poured lead in that direction, and then gave the Boer sharpshooter up as one as invulnerable as Achilles.

The next day the Boer ground was gone over and still the man was in the tree, dead, with his belt holding him in the branches, and history has it that there were exactly 465 bullet holes in him.

The Boers in the donga could be easily seen by our men on the left and by the Maxim gun section, but when they began firing on the enemy, the soldiers on the right creeping still forward, started the cry, "for God's sake stop firing on the left, you're shooting our own men," and the lovely chance at the donga-dwellers was lost.

Progress was indeed slow, the men lying on their empty stomachs in the hot sun, clinging to whatever presented itself in the way of cover.

The kharki clothes, wet by the river, had become dry, and, as if to keep the soldiers constantly drenched, a cold, chilling shower broke from the threatening heavens just before four o'clock. The Canadians lay cold and shivering, and where there was room for two behind a protection many a pair hugged each other to try and get a little warmth into their seemingly bloodless bodies.

The Boers' brisk fire never flagged, and where there was a possible chance of hitting the enemy our men answered their fire with no hesitancy.

All the companies were slowly but surely getting closer to the front. "H" Company came from reserves to supports, "F" and "G" Companies closed up, and all of "B" Company were at work.

When they had been behind they were in the uncomfortable position of receiving the bullets that passed over the heads of those in the firing-line, and that without the satisfaction of being able to fire back. I know quite well the silly

feeling a man has when he is being fired at, with no chance of shooting back.

Capt. Pelletier, in charge of "F" Company, was compelled to give up command of his company soon after it had rushed forward into the firing line, for the trying sun of the previous long marches and on the battle field had prostrated him. Lieut. Leduc accordingly led "F" Company through the rest of the engagement.

Dark clouds hovered in the heavens and reflected their gloom on the men who lay, though then well together, soaked and unhappy on that first dangerous field.

What was to be done? When would that steady crackle from the river bed and donga stop? When could they rest and eat?

The guns of the battery had closed up for the night, and had been withdrawn across the river again by the tired horses and more tired Royal Horse Artillerists. The two companies of Cornwalls who had been supporting them came on to the plain on the right, headed by Col. Aldeworth of that regiment. He was the senior Colonel, and Col. Otter accordingly took instructions from him.

Both Briton and Boer had almost come to a cessation of hostilities, and night was growing over the field of dead and living. An evening wind arose whose cold pierced to the marrow of the men's bones and shook them as though with ague.

The Cornwall Colonel said, "I have orders to

put an end to this thing. I shall finish it with the bayonet in five minutes."

"Fix bayonets," immediately rang along the lines of the regiments, and the clicking of the weapons on the damp muzzles of the rifles told at once that the men were ready.

Every ant hill, bush and stone, gave up its crouching soldiers.

"Charge!" and the men dashed forward with a grim determination that could be stopped only by death or wounding. Bullets rained at the men 800 yards from the trenches, and the air was full of the mingled whistling, buzzing, and sharp cracking of the Boer missiles, as they cut into the British lines, flew over the heads of our men, or dropped with a rushing puff into the sand in front of them.

The Boer rifle pits and the donga became in an instant one living mass of riflemen hitherto unknown. They were ready for the emergency and dealt out their destructive ammunition with lightning rapidity.

"Five pounds to the man first into their trenches!" yelled the Cornwall Colonel, and dropped on the dark sand, dead.

To be successful the men had to charge over almost a quarter of a mile—they could scarcely have done 200 yards—it was impossible.

The air was alive with the whip-cracking of the Mauser lead as it reached home, and the men dropped thick and fast.

Bugler Williams of "C" Company stood in the open and blew the long "charge" clear and distinct all through, flying almost in the face of Providence as he did it. Bugler Codner of "D" Company, had his bugle cords tangled, but he, sitting down, also rang out the "charge."

Those who could pressed forward, and the wounded lay where they fell.

The men were bound for the trenches but the task they were given was impossible. Every step cost a life in the lines, as the Boers beat back the rush.

Still the remnants went ahead. Bravely they forced themselves on the foe, and there were those of a dauntless courage who died within grasp of the Boers.

A few Canadians had been able to keep up the awful course, rushing ahead as if protected by magic spell, only to give up their lives at the end of the terrible stretch.

Darkness and gloom settled solemnly over the field, and the charge which had been so eagerly pressed and so persistently repulsed, had been a failure.

Back near the place where the charge had started, as many of the men as could, gathered to start for the bivouac near the drift they had crossed. Stretcher-bearers worked without resting bringing in the wounded. Some who could get up and walk were shot from the trenches again.

Warmed by the fires at the bivouac and

refreshed by a little food the men sank to rest at nine o'clock and slept till the dawn of day.

Meanwhile searching parties swept the field and all through the night the wounded were brought back to the battalion. Eighty casualties had nearly decimated the regiment, distributed as follows:—

"A" Company, six killed, nine wounded; "B" Company, three killed, fourteen wounded; "C" Company, two killed, eight wounded; "D" Company, three killed, seven wounded; "E" Company, four killed, eight wounded; "F" Company, none killed, seven wounded; "G" Company, two killed, three wounded; "H" Company, none killed, four wounded. Twenty killed and sixty wounded.

It was a heavy-hearted regiment that lay down in the Royal Canadian lines, grieving for the men who had in the morning appeared in the ranks for the last time, and sympathizing with those who still lived on, tortured by the pain of Boer bullets.

Near a grove of trees at the edge of the river, Father O'Leary, at noon next day, performed the burial service over the Canadians who had given up their lives the day before.

In a long trench seventeen bodies were tenderly laid side by side, and the first Canadian graves were made on the sandy veldt.

CHAPTER XXIX.

"POM-POM TUESDAY."

WHILE the men who had participated in the charge on the Boer trenches lay in bivouac on the night of the 18th of February, thinking for the most part that the whole affair had been a crushing defeat of our arms, Gen. Cronje had decided that it was not expedient that he should remain in the same position with his men and perhaps run the risk of another charge of cold steel. So in the night, while some of his men were busy sniping, he moved the burghers "up the line," as it were, and laagered further north along the west bank of the river.

After the Sunday encounter it took nearly all the next day to get lists fixed up, and a true state of the regiment made out. Those who had not been able to get back with the rest came plodding in by circuitous routes; the wounded were attended by Surgeon-Major Wilson and Surgeon-Capt. Fiset, and the dead had been reverently buried. The next day—known by all as "Pom-Pom Tuesday"—the men lay out in a scorching sun, and exchanged shots with the enemy whenever opportunity presented itself.

That was the day when the Boers turned their automatic, quick-firing, one-pound Vickers-Maxim on the regiment. This was the machine that was used so prominently all through the war on the British. Twelve one-pound shells in a belt, after the style of the Maxim gun, could be rattled off in as many seconds. On Sunday, the men had heard it from a distance—on Tuesday, they observed it in dangerously close proximity. The words which most nearly describe the sound of its discharge are pom-pom—pom-pom-pom, in dull quick successions. When twelve have been counted a long breath is taken, for then the men for whom it has been searching, know that there is a short rest till the gunners can fit in another belt of shells.

Speaking personally, I found the moral effect of the "pom-pom" greater than that of any other war weapon used, and in making this statement I am sure that nine-tenths of the men who have been under its fire will bear me out in it. As the war went on we made the acquaintance of more pom-poms, and at Zand River the soldiers were introduced to this quick firing fiend throwing three-pound shells—and accordingly men were three times as frightened of it.

This new opponent, of the one-pound species, then, was the one to give the Canadians a warm and heartburning reception on the 20th. Heads that were crouched low before, went inches nearer the centre of the earth, when that fast-coughing shell-distributor of the Boers started to work.

The cooking utensils and the water-cart started to come up to the regiment to provide a hasty repast for the men, but the unswerving attention paid to them by the "pom-pom" as they advanced, soon put a stop to this philanthropic calculation, and the men in charge of these supplies, were the happiest on earth when they got to the rear and found shelter. A bullet might, in a wild moment, be trifled with—but a "pom-pom" never.

An instance of the sharp watch kept by the Boers on our men on that Tuesday may be given: An officer was lying flat behind an ant-hill, one of his men was even flatter behind another ant-hill a yard away. Neither had been able to make a move without drawing fire. The officer carefully poured a little water into the lid of his tin canteen and quickly handed it to the man. No parts of their bodies were seen by the enemy but their arms, and as the tin flashed between the two it was shot through.

"I lost the drink," said the private.

"Close your mouth or you'll lose your head," retorted the officer, and the refreshment idea was at once given up.

While our men fired intermittently, the Boers sniped persistently, but succeeded in wounding only four of the Royal Canadians.

A day that will live in our men's campaign is that painful "Pom-Pom Tuesday."

CHAPTER XXX.

A WEEK CLOSE TO THE BOERS.

FROM "Pom-Pom Tuesday" till the following Sunday, the men had indeed severe trials of the campaign, doing outpost duty on the kopjes and around the level veldt, near the confines of Cronje's camp. The rainy season had set in in earnest, and as repeated storms burst over the contending armies, the fighters, wet and deathly cold, were able to realize what a South African winter was like.

The stony hills looked down over the muddy battlefield, and as the terrific lightning flashed over the veldt, followed by the fearful crashes of thunder, the former scenes of conflict were lighted up with a shivering electric extravagance hitherto unknown. The rain must have come through an almost freezing belt, for when it torrented down on the watching soldiers it was like a wetting from pails of ice water—and the wind blew chill. About three o'clock in the morning the cold of a South African winter is the most piercing that a person can experience the world over—that is, considering the numerous degrees of heat shown on the thermometer during the day. When can those nights ever be forgotten? No tents, of course, and the blankets away on the other side of the river, with the rubber sheets,

lying on the transports. The cold seemed to pass completely through a man's flesh, cling to the innermost parts of his anatomy with freezing tenacity, and then gradually diffuse itself from the inside, till it thoroughly permeated a person's whole being.

On Sunday, the 25th, after a severe all-night storm, the men were given a day of rest, and the Canadians lay around, glad of a respite from toil, basking on the few high spots that the sun was drying out.

On Monday, the Royal Canadians took their turn manning the trenches, which had been dug at right angles to the west bank of the Modder, one 1,100 yards from the Boer position, the farther one but half that distance from the enemy's trenches. "C" and "E" companies occupied that part of the 480-yard trench farthest from the river and the shallowest portion; "D" and "F" companies had the deeper part near the river, while "B," "G" and "H" companies, remained as a kind of support in the trench farther back. Lieut. Blanchard, who had arrived from Klip Drift, was meanwhile sent with "A" Company across the river to occupy a trench that had been built out from the eastern bank of the river a hundred yards or so below the first Canadian trench on the west side of the stream, where from their cover in the open they had an amount of very sharp firing during the day.

"C" and "E" companies were ordered to extend, deepen and widen the advance trench on

the left, and here, in a relentless sun, they worked, lying down as best they could, converting the meagre shelter at their end into a place more safe, while "D" and "F" companies, in the deeper and completed parts of this cover, gave the Boer line as much as they received.

The strength of all the companies had dwindled till the average for each, including officers, was but 80, the strongest being "E" Company with 90, "G" Company with 89, and "C" Company, the third strongest, with 87 soldiers all told.

The Cornwalls had had the last preceding forty-eight hours' vigil in the trenches, and a private, who had been somewhat incautious in showing himself, had paid the death penalty for it as our men passed out to occupy the redoubts.

All day the Canadians stuck to their work, being very careful not to expose themselves from behind the shelter they were hourly building up.

The North-West Corporal had a nice deep hole dug for himself, and was crouched as low as possible therein.

"Can't you get a little lower?" asked Private Banker, eyeing him.

"Not without going through the earth's surface," answered the wily non-com., and that was the way they all felt. The soldiers hugged mother earth, as if she were a friend whose worth had been dormant and had suddenly burst on the men of the regiment.

Then came, late in the afternoon, word that a night attack was to be made.

CHAPTER XXXI.

NIGHT ATTACK—CRONJE'S SURRENDER.

OFFICERS commanding companies were told precisely what the plan for the night attack was.

Shortly, it was this: Six companies, "C," "E," "D," "F," "G" and "H," were to start at two o'clock in the morning (February 27th), from the advanced trench, 550 yards from the Boers' nearest shelters, and proceeding in the dark were to get as near the enemy as possible covering a front of about 240 yards from left to right. The front rank men were to push on with bayonets fixed and magazines charged; fifteen paces behind them the rear rank were to proceed, with rifles slung and carrying spades and picks. In case the front rank were not seriously opposed, they were to enter the Boer trenches; if they were opposed they were to lie down and return the fire, covering the rear rank who were to at once open a trench for the firing line to fall back on, a dozen yards behind. Thirty engineers were also to help with the trench digging on our right. "B" Company, on account of losses and previous hard work, was in reserve, with "A" Company in their old place in the trench across the river. The Gordons (two companies only)

were to man the left of the advanced trench with fixed bayonets and orders not to fire for fear of hitting our men ahead. They were to be a sort of moral support behind the stealthy advancers. To the left, 800 yards from the river and almost facing it, the Shropshires were to be stationed with orders to open a heavy fire when they saw that our men were engaged, in order to divert the Boers' attention and make the danger lighter for the Royal Canadians. These plans were all well carried out, except that the Boers decided to open fire instead of allowing our men to walk into their trenches at will.

Between the time of issuing these orders and the beginning of the move the men rested, ate a little, and many had a much needed sleep in the trenches.

"How do you feel?" asked one of the two city regiment chums of the other, as they waked up from a short chilly sleep.

"All right," replied the other, "though I could do with half a tin of 'bully beef' to give me ballast. I'm a little light in the middle."

"Well, you can run all the faster," continued the first one, "but I mean how do you feel about this attack?"

"I don't fancy this night work," was the answer, "and look what Gen. Wauchope's men got at Magersfontein in the dark! I like the daylight for my business. I'd almost carry a lantern if I had one, but that's what brought grief to the Highland Brigade. I guess we had

better travel incog.," and the two peered out into the black night above the trenches.

"No sounds towards the laager," one went on. "I guess they've all —"

"Ready, men!" whispered the Sergeant, "now look sharp! Steady getting out of the trench! Ease off—no more than an arm's length. Quiet. Not a sound!"

The whole line was up on the veldt in a long row of black shadows, "C" and "E" companies with Major Buchan on the left in order, then came in succession to the right "D," "F," "G," and "H" companies in charge of Major Pelletier.

Col. Otter and his Adjutant, Lieut. Ogilvy, remained in the advanced trench.

It was twenty minutes past two in the morning.

The soldiers walking cautiously like blind men went carefully forward, keeping in touch with one another by the clasp of hands or the feel of the next man's tunic. There was no sound, and the anxious waiters in the trenches behind felt that each minute prolonged itself into an hour.

Trees here and there on the open were the cause of breaking touch between "G" and "F" companies, and two hundred yards from the starting point the men halted till the whole line in blackest darkness was put in order again. They were then but two hundred and fifty yards from the enemy, and to halt there on the open and perfect their further arrangements, was a feat in itself. It proved what discipline and courage was in the ranks of the Royal Canadian Regiment.

Then the advance continued, and stealing on like velvet-footed burglars, they slowly put more yards of gained ground behind them.

Every foot was a wonderful advance, and a yard then was as good as twenty any other time.

Could the Boers *see* them? No. Could they *hear* them coming? No one could say. Did they *know* they were coming? That was hard to tell.

What thoughts crammed the men's heads! What strange and uncanny feelings they had! What horrible recollections of other night attacks, disastrous beatings many times during the campaign!

Still, without a waver, they forged on, waiting for a dashing bayonet charge or—anything to relieve their minds in those restless moments.

Slow steps and cat-like movements brought them practically face to face with their enemy, for, on the right "G" and "H" companies were within thirty yards of the Boer trenches, and on the left "C" and "E" companies were but eighty yards from the Dutchmen, when—Bang! came from hundreds of rifles in the Boer trenches. The enemy's hiding-place was alive with the incessant click of triggers, and the air was full of bullets from the muzzles of rifles, practically staring in the faces of the Canadians. From right to left Cronje's men swept the advancing line, no longer advancing, but lying prostrate on the sand. Before the Canadians had a chance to fire, men dropped dead in the ranks. Then did

the rear rank ply their picks and spades, and dig with a well-nigh insane frenzy. Hotter came the continual fire, and quieter lay the first line, with their trembling bodies stretched on the open veldt, till they began to use their rifles in return.

At once it was found a mistake to keep shooting, since it only drew more aimed shots around them—then they stopped.

Still the burghers blazed away, and in the first ten minutes of their fiendish fusilade twelve of our regiment lay dead—one in "C" Company, three in "D," one in "E," three in "F," and four in "G,"—and in the course of the fierce fight thirty more lay wounded. Some person near the centre of the line shouted "Retire!"—no person ever knew who was the instigator of the order—and from centre to left the word soon ran along the line, and the men started back in groups as best they could, halting at times on the way to seek shelter from the pouring lead, scooping up little piles of sand with which to protect their heads, and then dashing back farther, when the Boers' fire quieted the least.

They did not scamper back in a confused mob; they retreated in a common-sense way. In the dark some got too far from the river and dropped into the trench where the Gordons' bayonets gave them a piercing reception, others edged too much to the right, but luckily for them they were able to retire in more safety through the bushes on the river bank.

When the rifles had rattled ceaselessly for fifteen minutes, the Shropshires on the left opened a heavy fire on the Boer trenches.

Meanwhile the order to retire had never reached "G" and "H" companies, who held on bravely, looking down the barrels of the Boer rifles but thirty yards away. "H" Company, under Capt. Stairs, had the position at the river bank, and "G" Company, with Lieut. Macdonnell in command, were next to the left. The former company of eastern Canadian soldiers escaped without a casualty, but the latter company in a few moments suffered one corporal and three privates killed and ten men wounded. Lieut. Kaye of "G" Company had heard the order to retire and took back with him part of the half company.

While the galling fire kept up, the men of these companies in the rear rank dug away at the trenches, knowing it was a matter of life and death, and the sappers who were with them worked with lightning speed. Amid a steady fire part of "G" Company were able to crawl back to the dongas in the river's high banks and kept up a continuous fire to cover the trench-diggers.

As soon as he could Lieut. Macdonnell drew back to the newly-made trench, and Lieut. Jones of the same company soon followed this example, with his men. Shortly, "H" Company's soldiers swooped into the trench, and while they kept sending their volleys of lead into the Boers'

trenches, the men of "G" Company took up the shovels and made the shelter more secure.

It was a brief fight, but a long half hour of deadly combat. Ten minutes of triple hell and twenty minutes of an ordinary inferno.

The Canadians still hanging on in the firing-line sniped away till dawn came, and then, with the faint light at five o'clock they kept it up for nearly another hour, searching out the Boer rifle pits strung along the river.

An old burgher jumped from the Boer trenches and waved his hands. The Canadians ceased firing and hollered for him to "come on in;" his heart failed him and he jumped into his burrow again, and the Canadians once more showered their bullets in.

Another appearance of the elderly Boer was a signal for the Canadians to cease firing, another disappearance of the Dutchman and another splash of lead followed him.

"Come in and surrender!" cried the Canadians, but the enemy paid no attention till the aged fighter had made two more sudden appearances from out his cover, and two as quick leaps back to his stinking rifle pit.

By six o'clock the Boer leader had rigged a dirty pillow-cover to the cleaning-rod of a rifle, and with no mistake in his slouchy movements, he slunk to the Canadian lines, and the eastern Canadians received the surrender. The hard-fighting Gen. Cronje, with his 4,200 men, gave himself up unconditionally to Lord Roberts, and

the Canadians, with their trenches built exactly 63 yards from the enemy's lines, had, by their gallant work, been "the last straw to break the camel's back." They had forced home the last thrust which he was not able to parry, and which brought him to the ground a beaten man.

The Royal Canadian Regiment had been the fighting germ in the heart of the British army that had wiped out at last the sorrowful remembrance of Majuba Day.

CHAPTER XXXII.

PAARDEBERG'S AFTERMATH.

THE surrender was well known in the Boer ranks, and with one accord the men who had given themselves up threw down their arms in piles and eagerly started to prepare for themselves a morning meal. Pots were soon boiling by the flickering fires under the three-legged iron cooking utensils, and the Dutchmen, as hungry, no doubt, as our men, were soon filling a long felt want.

The Canadians rested between the outer trenches of the Boers and the laager, but their wonted inquisitiveness and great hunger drove them in dozens into the enemy's lines in search of food. They proved to be excellent foragers, and as quickly as they could find meal and flour, together with baking powder, coffee, and the like, they, too, were devouring a well-earned breakfast. The straining night time had brought a joyful morning, and those who had been in mortal combat during the dark hours were soon practically eating side by side. Who were the greedier guests of that meal it would be hard to say, but the extra food supply received by our men was the most welcome for days, and it mat-

tered not whether it was secured from Boer or Briton.

Late that afternoon Lord Roberts rode over to congratulate the regiment on the work they had done. "The night before," said the Commander-in-Chief, "I went over the scheme for the night attack, and asked who were to occupy the trenches and make the attack, and when I was told that the Canadians had been given that undertaking, I was satisfied. I waited anxiously for the sounds of firing, waking at midnight and again at three o'clock, when the encounter had commenced. The gallant action of the Canadian regiment has had greatly to do with General Cronje's surrender. On Monday, after the heavy artillery fire, the enemy had considered the advisability of surrendering, but the night attack decided them. I have the greatest sympathy with those of your battalion who are wounded and I am gratified that they are being cared for in the New South Wales (Australian) field hospital, which is the best I have ever seen."

Some time after the surrender I explored the laager thoroughly. It was practically a number of underground Boer homesteads, with outside on the ground the big and valuable "trek" waggons and heavier articles, too cumbrous to take into the trenches. Such a conglomeration of household goods and munitions of war combined one would scarcely have expected even with the Boers. There were old beds and mattresses, blankets and cooking pots, rifles and car-

tridges, cornmeal and flour, old clothes and women's dresses, children's playthings and babies' boots were there. A couple of sewing machines, a melodeon, bibles and hymn-books, were scattered in confusion. Each one seemed to have with him a tin trunk. These were gaily painted and eagerly sought after to bring home as relics, but the trouble was to find one that had not been punctured or damaged by British shot or shell.

The costly waggons and Cape carts were burned and battered in a heap on the open from the effects of shrapnel and loads of lyddite, and the ground around had a jaundiced appearance from the frequent bursting of the latter. Here the Boers—and the ten women who were with them, including Mrs. Cronje—had lived for days, scarcely venturing to raise their heads above the ground. They had in those rabbit-like warrens eaten, slept and fought, confined in most cases in small redoubts, which would accommodate from one to six persons. I leave the reader, then, to imagine the state of the Boer shelters after such a continuous occupation.

Aided by the natural cover of the dongas in many cases, they built their trenches secure, often digging great holes in the perpendicular sides of them, so that creeping into this further protection, parallel with the surface of the ground, they were perfectly secure from any kind of fire.

Past this laager the Canadians moved in the afternoon, and bivouaced higher up the river,

where they could drink the water which did not flow over so many dead and decaying horses, oxen and mules.

Before his men were marched across country to the Modder River station, escorted by the North Lanks, Cronje was sent over to the Cape Government Railway station.

The day after the surrender (February 28th), Lord Kitchener was coming up the Cape Colony line on a special train, and I had the privilege of going up at the same time. The special was billed through to Modder River depot, but at Honeynest Kloof siding word came to the General that Cronje was on his way down on a special train. Our train stopped, and in a moment the first class saloon carriage containing Cronje and his wife pulled in at the siding, guarded by men with fixed bayonets at the ends of the car, and in charge of staff officers.

A couple of strides of Lord Kitchener's long legs brought him to the step of the Boer General's car. Another few steps and he was inside. I lost no time in being close behind.

Cronje met the hero of Khartoum with a sullenless typical of the Dutch toward English, and with his haggard eyes, reddened after the style of a bloodhound, gazed on him disconsolately, and as the tall British General stood in front of the captive leader, the latter with his low, thick-set stature, his partly bald head and newly trimmed whiskers, showed little interest in the meeting. To the congratulation of having

put up "a jolly good fight at Paardeberg," Cronje seemed utterly oblivious, and with little adieu Lord Kitchener was soon back in his place on the special, after having allowed some of us to see the last meeting of the British and Boer generals.

The next day I was among the 4,200 prisoners.

"What are the Boers like?" every person asks.

Picture an anæmic, sunburned farmer, with unkempt whiskers and hair, round-shouldered and stooped, lazily pulling at a cheap pipe, a greasy and battered soft slouch hat, a badly-fitting tweed or corduroy suit, schoonveldt (or low-heeled Dutch shoes), a man with an aversion to the sea and a double antipathy towards soap, and you have him.

There are exceptions in their ranks, but not many. Their ages ranged from fourteen to sixty, and there was scarcely one out of ten who could speak English. Their Kaffir servants in most cases accompanied them, carrying pots, pans, kettles, primitive provisions, and bright colored blankets, while many of the burghers wore cheap water-proof coats. They were as degenerate a looking rabble as any person could wish to see.

If they had not conclusively proved the contrary, they must have been looked on as unworthy foemen.

They were loaded into second and third-class carriages and covered trucks, and as they waited to start for Cape Town the British Tommies had to serve them with pails of water.

"I'd like to pour this water down your greasy neck," said one water carrier to a burgher who spoke good English.

"Oh, we've quit fighting now," answered the Boer prisoner, "you wouldn't be so cruel," and he shuddered at the thought of water on his skin.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

TO THE FREE STATE CAPITAL.

TIRED of the ill-smelling camp above the Boer laager the 19th Brigade were moved still further north along the river and settled at the place known as Orsfontein, not far from Stinkfontein (a very appropriate name at the time), and here, till the 6th of March the regiment lay, sometimes doing outpost duty and spending the nights on the bleak, barren kopjes or resting as best they could in the weakly shelters they had made out of old blankets, supported by their rifles, with bayonets attached to pieces of string or cord, taking the place of tent-pegs. These gypsy structures were good enough as a protection against the sun, if they were hourly shifted to make enough shadow, but they were absolutely worthless as a protection against rain, and storms just then, came with an almost constant frequence.

At Orsfontein the men dug trenches in the form of a rectangle, large enough to spread a blanket on the enclosed ground, but that scheme failed for, after the rain had poured down for half an hour, both trench and enclosure were covered with water. They might sleep at nights

there if they could, but it had to be in from two to six inches of water, and the men generally preferred, when the storm was raging, to sit up all night around the huge camp fires which they made of the trees and brushwood from the river banks. A few nights with absolutely no sleep and none in the daytime gave the Canadians a haggard, worried look, while the fever germs which had infected the Boer camp were, no doubt, finding fertile soil to grow in, in the volunteer battalion. The water was bad and the rations were scarce, the effects of all of which told on the soldiers when they at last reached Bloemfontein.

An advance was ordered on the 6th of March and the regiment, glad to be off from those pestilent precincts, moved east along the north bank of the river, and again, after marching from nine o'clock till noon, crossed the coffee-colored Modder, and settled for the afternoon and night a few miles past Koodoos Drift.

On a nice dry grassy plain the men at once fixed up their blanket sunshades, and for once in many days they were able to appreciate a comfortable camp.

When all were ready for the night's rest the order came that the battalion was to move off at daybreak, to be ready for another day of earnest work. A move of this kind means a lot for some departments of the army, and whoever else is able to sleep there is very little of it comes in the way of those in the Quartermaster's depart-

ment. From Quartermaster Lafferty down to the simplest helper, all were busy that night as they had been many a night before getting rations ready, preparing the wherewithal that the men might live. A grand supply of fresh meat had been killed for the brigade, and this new and welcome addition was chopped, cut and handled all through the night, ready for the march in the morning.

The soldiers were waked from their slumbers at three o'clock, and by four were on the way to form the extreme left of the infantry used in routing the Boers from the many kopjes which our men had been warned the night before were to be attacked. Stories spread swiftly early the night before that the enemy had the high hills within our sight strongly fortified; that their Krupp and Cruesot guns were eminently stationed far up on the kopjes, and that the conflict would probably be one of the hardest fought of the march. Like many others, it was a camp yarn, one which held some truth, but one which was exploded when the sun went down on those same hills the next night, that is, as far as our regiment was concerned.

Under Col. Buchan all the companies, with the exception of "C" and "E," moved off early with the rest of Smith-Dorrien's brigade towards the kopje which was the farthest right of the Boers' fifteen-mile position. All along toward the circle of kopjes there was a move made, but the more mobile cavalry and artillery were trooped out in

thousands to prosecute the ever destructive work, and to get closer to the enemy. Our transports was drawn together ready to start forward at any moment, and the men and officers of "C" and "E" companies rested on the slope of the hills near the loaded waggons.

After dawn there were no chances taken, and our infantry men proceeded in regular fighting formation, showing what looked to be from eight to ten paces interval. The Shropshires were on the left with the skirted Gordons behind them, while our own regiment followed the Cornwalls on the right. For three miles they went on this way toward Leeuwkop, the solid-looking but lonely kopje on the extreme left, where the Boers had some big guns placed. There was a blessed halt while "Shrops" reconnoitred about the kopjes to the left front some two miles away. These were also found to be occupied by the enemy and their guns—field pieces. A part of the force again resumed the onward march at eleven a.m., after this reconnaisance.

To make things interesting during the halt, the Dutch guns on Leeuwkop rang out on our naval twelve pounder guns, which were six or seven hundred yards to the right of the infantry brigade.

First, the British guns blared forth at the hidden enemy; then, when all was still, the heavy shells of the Boers banged out on our batteries' positions, and a nicer artillery duel one could not wish to see. The range on one of our

naval guns, the Boers had to a nicety, and the persistent way in which they worried the Jack Tars at work could not help but make one admire the enemy's efficiency as artillerists at least. But one thing militated against them as it had all through the war—their bad ammunition—it fell on the mark, but falling, did little harm for it was seldom that their shells burst, so that most of their splendid handling of their guns was valueless. There were many shots wasted firing at the Boers' guns on Leeuwkop, but when the range was found the booming Boer cannon in front of our infantry were closed up for awhile. There was a pause in the day's business. The enemy's men at the guns may have knocked off for lunch, but it is more probable that they were busy fixing up whatever repairs were necessary for the proper working of their field pieces. Whether it was lunch or necessity the Boers were soon at their posts again in front of us, and for a while gave as much as they received.

The whole face of Leeuwkop was searched by the naval guns, and as the immense puff balls burst now at the base of the hill, now at the top, and again along the centre of the gigantic ridge, there was silence in the enemy's territory.

Down near the river bank a field battery of the British began business in earnest on the enemy in another long kopje across the Modder. There was need of guns with a longer range, for, far away, from the end of their position, the

Boers could be seen trekking toward the east. They could not be touched since they had evacuated the position and they were safe from the bursting shrapnel as they fled out of our range. All along the vast extent of their position the Boer guns were well placed and thundered away at the naval long toms which were working as well on land as they could hope to work planked firm on the decks of the ships which claim them.

Two of us sat on a kopje which commanded a view of the whole theatre of action. We paid nothing for the seats, and still they were the best from which to see the whole performance. The show was the longest I ever sat through, and we even had lunch while we waited for the next act.

Away to the right and to the left across the great semi-circle the kopjes ran with scarcely a determined break. Right below us were some of our batteries; and at times in front of them, and again to the left of them the infantry divisions were specked over the open veldt, while, closing up from the right, rode regiments of cavalry, moving over the ground in sombre masses, and appearing, without the aid of field glasses, like blurred spots. The infantry farthest away were scarcely more discernable than sand flies. We were nearest to our artillery batteries, and had the best chance of seeing the grand work they were doing, and in some instances also the fine work which the Boer artillerists did (even without the aid of the celebrated Albrecht, who was cap-

tured with Cronje, and who had hitherto been the guiding star of the Boer gunners).

One naval 4.7 gun lay below to the left, and, in our solitary eyrie among the rocks of our grand stand kopje, we had been closely watching it pummel the sides of a Boer stronghold on the far side of the river. It was excellent gunnery, and, in our humble opinions, we had decided to give the honors of the day, so far, to this particular rifle-cannon, when a belch from the enemy sent a shell but a few yards from our idol. The idol held its tongue for a few moments, and was just about to regain its speech after this sudden shock, when bang went number two from the Dutch devil, and closer still came the shell which the enemy had fired. What reply the naval gun would have given to its invisible opponent will never be known, for, in fewer minutes than it took shells, four excellent shots were sent into the sailors' long-snouted war weapon, and the 4.7 death-distributor was silenced for hours. There are generally at least two sides to a question, and in this case the enemy stood in the victors' boots, having conquered magnificently in one single instance, but, all guns considered, beaten to the retreating point. Out of many single duels they won one decisively, and had to leave the others unquestionably to our guns.

It was a day of grand experience, and, when I looked down on the panorama of battle, it was hard to realize what destruction could be done

by the shells and yellow loads of lyddite as they broke from place to place on the plains and against the rocky ridges. It was another thing for those who were hovering around in close proximity to these same shells and jaundiced death balls when they broke from the strength of the stuff which seethed within them. We preferred the top of our solitary kopje.

Writers have told of the constant blazing of guns in actual battle, and worked up the imaginations of their readers till most people who have not seen a good artillery action may think that the guns bang steadily, like a bunch of fire-crackers. Such is not the case. I watched this action between the two armies from eight o'clock in the morning till five o'clock in the evening, and the hottest firing all day was one shot about every two minutes, and often not one for a quarter of an hour.

This is the ordinary bombardment of a position during an action, though it must not be understood that there are not exceptions to the rule. The Zand River battle, as will be shown, was one in which the Canadians saw as fierce an artillery play as took place any time during the campaign.

In speaking of the action of lyddite on those close to a bursting shell, one of the Boers, who escaped from Cronje's laager on the first fateful Sunday at Paardeberg, and who had had his first experience with the stuff at Magersfontein, told me that the sickening fumes often knocked their

horses out, and that the effect on the men was to make them "feel a bit queer in the head for ten or fifteen minutes." At Paardeberg I saw the trenches and the ground around them covered with patches as if strewn with yellow ochre, all the result of bursting lyddite.

To come back to this Wednesday's doings. When the Boers had so successfully sought out our naval guns the latter were ordered to retire, and consequently took a position half a mile farther from the aggravating guns which had been troubling them.

On completion of the retirement our regiment was sent to support the naval weapons, and in doing so crossed in front of Leeuwkop, where the Boers had opened their first effective big gun fire. When the Canadians had taken up their new position, an immediate order came that they, with the Gordons, were to follow the Highland Brigade, and at once they were off again at the heels of the Scotch regiments, following the north bank of the river. Heavy with the long march, the men ploughed on, pursuing the enemy, who were then scampering from their position north of, and from Leeuwkop itself, whence the flying Dutchmen had been routed by a flank movement of the other half of our brigade—the Shropshires and Cornwalls. While the Gordons and Canadians had been moving one way and another in front of Leeuwkop, the Duke of Cornwall's men and the Shropshires had been doing a brilliant bit of the day's work, and to the latter regi-

ment belongs the credit of capturing one of the enemy's guns, which had been playing so important a part during the early part of the fight. The movement of the Shropshires and Cornwalls had been sharply executed, and the retreat which the Boers beat was a thorough compensation for their around-the-bush undertakings.

Still toward the north bank of the river the Canadians kept on, at the same time to the south of the great kopje which had occupied so much of the infantry's attention. The guns had set the secreted enemy in motion from all their strongholds, the cavalry troops kept them moving; and our infantry moved steadily on to be sure that the ground once taken was solidly held. To keep up with the fast movements of these two swift branches of the army, entailed miles of tramping. Hour after hour, and no apparent rest in sight, the infantry followed at their best pace, and stopped only momentarily at the end of a very long march, after they had left the naval guns. Here their haven shifted, for still another order reached them to leave their then location (the Poplar Grove Drift), and push on to Slagtkraal to occupy a kopje. There they once more met the Cornwalls and the Shropshires who had circled to the north of Leeuwkop. When the total distance was pencilled up at 3 o'clock, it was found that 18 miles had been covered. What the men had hastily shoved into their haversacks to eat had been long since devoured. Wherever water was seen, it was

eagerly lapped up, and the soldiers even sipped at the sluices in swamps which were passed through en route. Canadian men fell down like dogs, and drank of the water which beasts had passed through, gulping the mud with it, and glad to partly soothe their parched tongues and swollen lips. The greatest suffering at times on these long marches has been on account of lack of water. Once I remember, on the great human drive from Paardeberg to Bloemfontein, I saw soldiers dipping up water in a thin pond, where the carcasses of four recently-drowned horses were still lying rotting in the pool. Repulsive to think of, but true in fact. Slagtkraal was heaven to those six companies of Canadians, and just as much of a paradise for the doughty men who had also been with them on the march. Any stopping place is heaven when a man is nearly done.

The Canadians formed advance post of the division which was then mobilizing at Poplar Drift, and during all the next day (Thursday, March 8th) and night they were on the kopje at Slagtkraal, in the vicinity of which chickens and the like roamed at large with no small amount of risk to their lives. Whatever dainties of this kind strolled in the way (and in some cases out of the way) of the regiment were promptly taken care of and put to a popular use. Flour was a god-send just then, and a quantity secured there, no matter where it came from, was the means of quieting the men's craving stomachs.

All this time, "C" and "E" companies had been behind with the transport, making an all-night march after a late start on Wednesday night. They halted for the night, and orders came that they must push on, as the other men ahead were waiting for their blankets and rations. They were in almost as bad a way themselves, since the transport waggons were all packed, and it was imperative that they should not be disturbed. They forged on tiredly through the night and over the rocky rough road, and before dawn, had covered 20 miles on the road to Bloemfontein, and camped at Slagtkraal.

The next morning the whole division started for Dreifontein.

It was a terrible test for all, more toilsome marching (when the men were scarcely fit to stand it) and more miles. Given the rations the men did not mind the miles so much, but the miles minus the rations are the worst of warfare. This Saturday march was a grand bit of going, for in nine hours, not counting a halt of two and a half hours the whole distance was covered, though a weary lot of soldiers sauntered into the bivouac, and sank to sleep before the camp fires had ceased to blaze after the evening meal. Even the negroes, whose chief means of locomotion in life has been walking, fell to rest like beasts of burden tired of monotonous work. When the African negro wearies of the "trek" the white man must.

Coming into Dreifontein, the head of our column was within half a mile of part of the sixth

division which had that day been engaged in the battle of Abraham's Kraal, and for a couple of hours our men were able to see and hear the bombardment of the kopjes which was going on to the east of us. Fortunately, the stiff struggle was at an end, and the enemy between the two divisions (the sixth and ours—the ninth) needed no more beating, and even if they had, I know that the Canadians were in no frame of mind for fighting. Glad they were that the disastrous day was done, so far as fighting went.

The British wounded from this battle, and many Boers too, were brought into Dreifontein on Sunday morning, and our troops buried two hundred and ten of the enemy, of whom I know that more than one hundred were laid to rest under their own dry veldt in one long grave. Sunday night saw us at Aasvogelkop after a short set-to of eight miles.

Then came the beginning of the last week of the triumphal march, and on Monday from dawn till almost dark we travelled till Venter's Valley gave a suitable place for halting. Only eighteen miles, so nothing much to speak of. A few farms and as many potato patches which the Irishman before us had singled out and dug over a couple of times in search of their beloved food. Our men, those who could, did not hesitate to dig again, but the best performance I know of was twenty-seven potatoes as the result of an hour and a half's wholesome digging. Those twenty-seven potatoes were more valuable at the

time than so many golden eggs, and far more palatable. Any potatoes were a novelty, and the March vintage of "spuds" was, to Canadians, a thing never before seen, but the small size of their find almost deprived them of getting even a glimpse of the coveted farm-yard production.

The end of the journey was to our men like rushing trenches, it seemed to be a rally for a grand finish, a rush for freedom, a jump for liberty.

At the end of Tuesday's march—the 13th—was Ferriera Spruit—and the railway. At last we seemed to come in touch with beloved civilization, and to be within a living world again.

What a change to see a railway line, something that had apparently never been appreciated before. It held a charm which brought cheers from the thousands of men, as an engine shunted up the track where the 19th Brigade and the Royal Canadians lay half a dozen miles from Bloemfontein.

The capital of the Free State had been delivered to the British without a struggle, even in its suburbs. Troops and transports trailed into the quaint Dutch town, but the Canadians on that day of triumphal entry had to be satisfied with the camp they occupied some six miles from town.

Early the next morning I started for the town and all along there was the snake-like procession of waggons and men, alone, in sections, in companies and battalions, sometimes in brigades,

trooping along to the town of which the late Orange Free State was so proud.

Our conveyance ambled down the road which gets rougher the nearer it approaches town, and apparently from all points of the compass, the renowned Tommy Atkins had stirred himself for the occasion and leaving nearly all the camps behind he had decided to pay his respects to Bloemfontein. All along the recent route fuel had been so scarce that when the soldier came to a bit of dry wood he picked it up and carried it to put on the fire which cooked his evening meal. It was a good plan, and often when long barbed wire fences were cut to give passage to the troops, the fence posts were chopped down for dozens of yards and taken possession of by those who would later have a warm repast. The custom of carrying fagots had become such a deep-seated and recognized one, that for fear there was no fire wood in Bloemfontein or vicinity, the soldiers still struggled with bits of boxes and dry sticks even as they entered the town.

Plains as level as cultivated lawns stretch for miles on the east side of the town and here the sand-covered and kharki-colored soldier was to be seen making from the country to the city to attend the great convention of British troops, to occupy the place that President Steyn had quitted but the day before.

Even our impertinent ponies picked up their ears as they saw such numbers of soldiers surrounding the town, and often without provoca-

tion, stopped to survey the scene and to generally take things easy. They must have heard so much of Bloemfontein on the way across country that they knew the place at sight. Artillery, cavalry, infantry, Imperial troops and volunteers, were all there. It was a federation of the forces.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE STAY AT BLOEMFONTEIN.

THE thrifty little capital of the Orange Free State received the British with open arms, and the three thousand five hundred people of the town, including fifteen hundred blacks, were glad of the English occupation. They made the British troops heartily welcome, and some who were formerly great Boer sympathizers quickly changed their allegiance, and began to conduct themselves in an abnormally British style. As we drove in, everywhere the loyal residents were hoisting the Union Jack which had so long remained in secret hiding places.

One Boer, who kept a hotel, and who had supplied the burghers but a day or two before with free liquor on the market square, and who led the Dutchmen in singing the Volksleid, had a British flag hoisted on his flag staff, but the other residents at once took it down for him, and quietly informed him that he was no fit subject to float that flag, so that the two-faced Free Stater was not able to make the display which he had counted on to make him a popular favorite.

Those who could, started small restaurants and

coffee rooms, where the hungry soldiers eagerly devoured everything provided. Just outside of the town limits, on an excellent ground, the Canadians lay from March 15th till April 21st, and though all regiments lost heavily from fever, they had a long rest, with a chance to recruit their strength.

The Friend of the Free State, one of the newspapers of the capital, was changed into *The Friend*, and managed and edited by the war correspondents. Regular and official war news was a treat. At times there were some exceedingly good original contributions, but in all, under the *régime* of the correspondents, the paper was a very weakly publication.

When in town, the headquarters of many of the Canadian officers was at the "Athletic Hotel," where the genial and true British proprietor, Francis Hudgson, did everything in his power to make things pleasant for members of our regiment. His comfortable place was at the disposal of the Royal Canadians, and their appreciation of his many kindnesses was the cause, on a couple of occasions, of the presentation to him and his amiable wife of presents whereby the soldiers of this Dominion should not soon be forgotten by him.

Bloemfontein did a thriving business, and some storekeepers charged outrageous prices for their goods. This continued till the British authorities had to fix a settled scale of prices, in order to protect the soldiers, who were for a while, practically robbed.

Dining rooms of hotels were crowded to their fullest extent, bars did a brisk trade, stores were ransacked for supplies, unemployed were set to work. Bloemfontein looked her best the day the British came to her to stay.

It did not fall to the lot of our Royal Canadians to march through the town, since their camp was pitched on the near side of it, but all of the regiment afterward had chances to go in on leave, and see the place which had been their goal for weeks.

Preparations were then being made for the Canadians to start for Pretoria, three hundred miles north, where the entry into the Transvaal capital might not be attended with the peace which greeted them at Bloemfontein on their arrival. The proposed plan was ten miles marching a day, which meant that thirty days' solid tramping without a fight would bring them there ; but, as it had been in the past, it was only reasonable to expect it in the future, and one thing at least seemed quite probable, and that was that Her Majesty's mile would be prolonged to that Danish mile which is so detested the army over.

Our sick and wounded were beginning to come back, and at that time Major Pelletier and Lieut. Armstrong, "E" Company, returned from hospital, having recovered from their Paardeberg accidents. Colour-Sergt. Wm. Holmes of "A" Company arrived after a long illness from enteric fever, while all the way from Toronto a young

chap named Pullen landed to join "C" Company, and though he had to parade in civilian clothes, he was in the ranks with the Toronto men, give ing practical evidence of his eagerness to see the seamy side of the war game. Later came another Toronto man, Gavin Wallbridge, who had succeeded in reaching the front through his own exertions. He also was for the Toronto company.

It had been a case of feast or famine for a long time with the Royal Canadian Regiment, with a great deal more of the latter than the former. They had had in the last three months famines of all kinds—scarcity of food, lack of shelter and dearth of clothes, but in the middle of April they had had prepared for them a little in the form of a supply of clothes. People often say what a grand thing it is to be well clad, but let Canadians take these last weeks with Colonel Otter's men, and they would be compelled to say what a magnificent thing it is to have enough clothes to cover one. The kharki canvas (even that made in Canada) will wear out at the end of an indefinite time; boots will almost batter themselves to pieces, without the aid of scuffing by the men, and shirts have a nasty habit of tearing themselves up till they resemble the tatters of a tramp. In fact, soldiers' clothes will fade away into thin air, just as little treasures do which the unsophisticated fighter is foolish enough to leave in his pocket.

The Government will supply clothes at the end of a certain period after they are worn out,

but the powers that be do not undertake to replace little trinkets that have melted away.

When the regiment left Belmont it was pointed out that a new wardrobe would have been an appropriate present for most of the ragged men, who had to practically sew themselves up to keep on the inside of their uniforms. They needed clothes at Belmont, they were in greater need of them at Paardeberg, and they actually suffered for want of them in Bloemfontein. Such a varied lot of outlandish outfits as the men lined up in is hard to imagine. They wore anything on parade from the full dress uniform of the captain of a whaling-vessel to blankets wrapped around their legs, while their trousers were being put together piece by piece for the last time.

There were many men with blankets wound around them, and it was not an infrequent sight on a warm day to see the Canadians here and there wearing their heavy overcoats in lieu of their badly battered kharki. The more fortunate ones at times secured pieces of clothing from the business-like Tommy Atkins of other corps who had managed to get an extra supply. When members of other regiments had things for sale a shilling went a long way, and at Belmont, soldiers of an Irish regiment disposed of good tunics for twelve pence. Of course, at this price, there were plenty of ready buyers, but few able to sell. This particular Irish regiment could not be bothered carrying a superabundance of clothing. They travelled "light," as they say in the army.

At Bloemfontein the mail began to arrive more regularly, and, thanks to the efficient postal corps sent out from Canada, the soldiers of the battalion were able to count on at least a weekly distribution of their much-prized letters. The packages sent out on the later transports which carried the Canadians, went woefully astray, and in hundreds of cases the men never so much as saw the presents which kind friends in Canada had sent out to them to the front. This was due to the enterprise which certain soldiers and sailors displayed in finding out what the contents of the parcels consisted of. If they could be made use of before they arrived at their destination they were frequently opened, and the presents never saw the front.

After arriving at Bloemfontein the regiment had its full share of sickness, and at one time there were ninety-one men and four officers of the Royal Canadians lying in the various hospitals.

The Canadians had taken part in all branches of the war with the best of the regular regiments of the British army, and had come out quite near the top, and it was only too true that when it came to filling the hospitals with sick men, our regiment was one most ready to almost head the list. Brave in battle, heroes during hardships, but they were more susceptible to fever than one liked to see.

All over the town were hospitals, and in most of the long lists of patients were to be found

names of the men that were also on the roll of the Royal Canadians. The largest buildings in the town had been turned into hospitals. Grey College, the O.F.S. barracks, the Dames' Institute, the Raadzaal, the Ramblers' Club, and other suitable structures, were all flying the white flag with the red cross, telling of sickness and suffering inside. Everywhere could be seen attendants, nurses and surgeons with their little red and white arm badges—in fact, a small nursing army —looking after the British soldiers, who were then too plainly showing the effects of Lord Roberts' grand march from the Cape Colony Railway to Bloemfontein, one which outshines his celebrated triumph from Kabul to Khandahar. The former achievement of the great British Field-Marshal is in history's pages, but this last undertaking must be re-written with greater emphasis, when it is time to hand down to future generations an account of the march to Bloemfontein.

Lord Roberts' famous march to Khandahar, lasting twenty-three days, was made by ten thousand of his men, some eight thousand horses, while there were also eight thousand natives, who helped the work to an inestimable degree.

His natives' special duty was to cut grass and carry water, and no matter how late the regiment arrived in camp, there was something ready for the men and animals. They were never without fresh bread and always had full rations. What a treat!

Then contrast the heart-breaking month of the Bloemfontein march.

I have already described the trying ordeals which confronted the brave Britishers on this journey in which our regiment went through with the rest. Comparison shows that in this later military achievement there were thirty days occupied (mostly with fighting, one encounter lasting practically ten days at Paardeberg), thirty thousand men, ten thousand animals and five thousand natives, who did *not* cut grass and carry water. Regiments arriving in camp late looked out for themselves. The soldiers rarely had fresh bread, and were seldom if ever on full rations. Last, and certainly not least, this army was cut down as light as possible and only one-fifth of the medical supplies and necessities were taken, while four-fifths of the stretcher-bearers were dispensed with.

Thus was the Bloemfontein march undertaken and carried out, and as was only to be expected, since the end had come, and the matter had proved successful, the men and beasts began to show the effects of it.

After Surgeon-Col. Ryerson's arrival from Toronto, acting on behalf of the Red Cross Society he had established a splendid hospital in the Masonic Hall at Kimberley, where four Canadian nurses were in charge. Ninety beds were turned out by the De Beers mine, and there was no temporary base hospital superior to it in South Africa. Three hundred pounds sterling

and Canadian supplies efficiently equipped it, and the high praise of General Lord Methuen and the principal medical officer was praise fully merited for the work done by Dr. Ryerson, who, on leaving Kimberley, left fifty pounds sterling with Lord Methuen to be used as occasion required. In addition to this grand work, Dr. Ryerson also supplied one hundred and ten beds in other hospitals between Kimberley and De Aar. Some of the Canadians had been cared for at Kimberley, but for the most part, they were outside of Bloemfontein, south of Orange River, and at the different hospitals in and around Cape Town.

As Canadian Commissioner of the Red Cross Society, Surgeon-Col. Ryerson's work was excellent.

Those of the Royal Canadians who were in the brigade hospital received every attention, and, while others lay on the ground, Col. Otter had extra rugs, mattresses and blankets for his men. With the medical department cut to one-quarter its ordinary strength, a dearth of necessary supplies had come, and the corps that could not supply its own medicine had to do without. Thanks to the people of Canada her soldiers were supplied with all they needed out of the money so generously subscribed, and hundreds of pounds were spent by the Commandant in procuring medicines and whatever else the suffering men required.

Good Friday was properly observed by divine

service in the morning, but it seemed as strange an Easter time for the Canadians as Christmas did, more like a lovely day in June.

The day was celebrated by a great football match in the afternoon between the officers of the Gordon Highlanders and the Royal Canadians' officers, which went to our men by a score of eight to nothing. Two tries, and the Scotch gentlemen failed to score.

I had seen many football matches but never one exactly like this. It was a colored panorama, but still a white man's game.

Lieut. Marshall of Hamilton, of Tiger fame, who seemed so much at home among the hills there, put a few choice words of advice in the ears of the Canadians before they scampered out to the gridiron in true college fashion. Each winked at the other as if he understood what the Hamiltonian meant when he spoke.

Bloemfontein people came all the way from town to see the struggle, anxious Tommies crowded the touch-lines, and an empty cab, with a driver not quite so empty, supplied the grandstand.

Meanwhile our officers were busy looking up English rules under which the game was played. Having fully considered the seriousness of the proposition the Canadians left their dressing-quarters, and headed by Capt. Maynard Rogers of Ottawa, with a solemn face, the procession started for the enemy's country.

The Canadian's team was dressed and undressed this way:—

Chaplain Almond, resplendent in new underwear, a Boer hat and a smile or two on his determined face.

Lieut. Temple, "B" Company, looked dainty in red and black, with bright socks and a becoming "T" on his breast.

Capt. Barker, "C" Company, wore a cigarette and dum-dum bullets, a cap three shades too small and leather stockings. His hair was neatly brushed,—so were his boots.

Lieut. Swift, "E" Company, came in the garb of a Quebec lacrosse player and was very spry in his trim white outfit. He had been looking back and forward to the game for a long time.

Lieut. Marshall, "C" Company (captain of the team), had a tickled look on, also a pair of kharki trousers shorn from the knees down. He wore large boots and no stockings.

Lieut. Armstrong, "E" Company, arrived in a choice red sweater of Alfred the Great pattern. He was also adorned in dress trousers and a sleeping cap.

Lieut. Lawless, "D" Company, hove in sight in the swimming suit which had made him famous in Ottawa and Hull, with a reinforcement of duck trousers. He donned a peanut cap and looked airy and light.

Lieut. Willis, "G" Company, was buried beneath a bunch of woollens, which looked like blankets. His knees were the only parts of his anatomy visible.

Lieut. Oland, "H" Company, was dressed as an Italian count, who had recently struck hard luck. He brought extra boots with him.

Lieut. Lafferty, Quartermaster, flew on to the grounds in his Yukon suit, and struck fear in the hearts of the Highlanders.

Lieut. Stewart, "D" Company, wore whiskers and also had on a tobogganning outfit from the Canadian capital.

Lieut. Laurie, "E" Company, had a sort of Sing Sing jersey with McGill University colors on it. He was also well groomed.

Capt. Burstall, "B" Company, waddled in with an outfit which may have belonged either to Poundmaker or Noah.

Capt. Weeks, came decked in the same suit that his great-grandfather wore in the charge of the Light Brigade. He wore the latest shape in soft veldt hats.

Capt. Fraser, "E" Company, wore lace and chiffon, and, up to the time that he was released from the team, looked extremely smart.

The Canadian officers took the lead and the result was never in doubt.

It was a novel affair in war time, the most interesting part being the study of the Canadian football uniforms worn on that occasion.

CHAPTER XXXV.

FIGHTING TO THABA 'NCHU.

TWO marches from Bloemfontein (thanks to Lord Kitchener's restless disposition), one to Boesman's kop, and one to Rietfontein, without finding any quarry, made the men of the Royal Canadians feel disappointed. Leaving their tents and trinkets behind again, Col. Otter's men left Bloemfontein, expecting, as before, to be back within a couple of days, but these lengthened into weeks, and the convalescent resort was left to shelter other regiments, but left with about two hundred men of the R.C.R. who were on the sick list, and through one disability or another, were not able to go on. All our men in hospital were doing well when the battalion left the capital.

Early on Saturday, April 21st, the regiment was on parade ready to move on the order which had been given late the night before. Those who, for any reason, thought they were unable to go on; paraded sick, and when they lined up there was not a very great deal to choose between them, and many of the men who were ready to take up the march. No sooner had the distinction been made between the well and the ill than the order

came that the regiment would not move off at once, that perhaps it would not move at all, but to stand ready to proceed in the afternoon. Ready the regiment stood, and, by a later order, moved from their Bloemfontein lines at half-past one o'clock in the afternoon, when some of those who paraded sick were in condition to take their places in their companies.

Away through the undulating stony streets of the town, out past the gaol, on a commanding hill, and past the vast supply park, the Canadians with the Gordons, Cornwalls, and Shropshires, were again on the veldt, which they had trod before, in the direction of Lynch's farm at Springfield. There is plain sailing, so to speak, out to this place, and with the exception of a couple of ever-occurring spruits, the march was as easy as could be over a level road. Springfield was reached ere nightfall, and there was, as is usual in these places, nothing to be seen but the "winkel" (store), where the shopkeeper stood in the open door bidding a smiling Hebrew welcome, with hands turned out and close to his sides; but nothing was for sale in the destitute-looking place save articles such as farmers, but not soldiers, might sometimes want.

Sunday there was no different from any other day, as far as the war goes, and if you can't hear church bells ring out in the morning, Mauser bullets or big guns can easily take up the call to prayer, and will bring a man to his knees just as quickly as the bells.

Fine weather and good spirits augured well for the beginning of the week, and Monday, the 23rd, opened as do most of the days of the South African, clear, bright winter—a winter so different to that of Canada. No vestige of snow; warm, sunny days, and an exquisite atmosphere, where one can see a man as plainly at two miles as a person could ordinarily in Canada at a quarter that distance. To the Canadians the winter had been the ideal season; the days are like those of a perfect October in Canada, though some of the nights did grow extremely chilly.

The Boers had been in possession of the water works for some weeks, and though they controlled Bloemfontein's water supply, they did not make the stand at this point of vantage which might have been expected.

Early in the morning the brigade started for Boesman's kop, the Gordon Highlanders in front, followed by the Royal Canadians, who were ahead of the Cornwalls. The mobile force of mounted infantry, two thousand strong, under Col. Legge, swept around to the east of this small position, and, beyond a desultory fire, encountered no opposition. They rode on to the water works, which the Boers had fallen back upon. The Boers had placed one of their big forty-pounder guns on the far side of the Modder River to that on which the water works plant was situated, and opening fire within, forced our cavalry back from the position. While these

operations were in progress the infantry plodded on at a good rate, skirmishing on the left of the line. No Canadians were hit, in fact there were no casualties.

Once around Boesman's kop, all eyes were firmly fixed on the great high chimney at the water works. The infantry regiments had seen it when at Springfield on the first night; they had seen it from the same place on the sortie weeks before, and they wanted it, but night came on and prevented the attack that day. Some three miles from the water works the men bivouacked.

The "rouse" startled the 19th Brigade at four o'clock on Tuesday, the 24th, and after satisfying the inner man in the dark, a start was made at 6.30. The wily Boer had withdrawn his guns while our men slept. The Gordons led the march, then came the Royal Canadians, both in extended order, followed by the Shropshires. Our brigade had been reinforced by two batteries, the 2nd Field Battery, and our old friends of "P" Battery, Royal Horse Artillery, with whom we had lain side by side for weeks at Belmont.

Under Col. Otter the Canadian regiment marched in line of half battalions, "D," "B," "F," and "H" companies on the right, with "C," "A," "G," and "E" companies on the left.

A crackle of rifle fire on the left of the line opened the day's work. The Gordons had rather more to do than our battalion. A small kopje, which confronts one just before the pumping station, was quickly carried, and a couple of

parting shots served to clear the Dutch obstructionists from the water works. No stop to speak of was made here, since it was necessary to forge ahead and drive the enemy from the small chain of kopjes farther west of the Modder.

Once the water works were under British protection, it remained to drive the Boers from the kopjes beyond the river.

In the advance the Canadians were disposed as follows:—"D" Company, under Capt. Rogers, and "B" Company, with Capt. Burstall in charge, were on the extreme right; "C" Company, with Captain Barker in command, and "A" Company, headed by Lieut. Blanchard, were, like the rest, well extended, and occupied the right centre. Farther left were, of course, the other companies, "E," in command of Capt. Fraser; "F," in charge of Lieut. Leduc; "G," in Lieut. Jones' care; and "H," under Capt. Stairs. Kopjes, linked together by smaller hills, forming the objective points, as they had on so many previous occasions, were carried without loss.

The whole week had been one of great activity for the brigade, but Wednesday, the 25th, proved to be a day of unusual interest, attended by the killing of one of the R.C.R., the wounding of Col. Otter and two other men. By four o'clock on the afternoon previous our column had succeeded in taking possession of Mimosa kop, where a halt was made, and where the Canadians lay for the night.

There was a rather lethargic beginning to the

25th, and what proved to be a serious part of the week looked lazy at first.

A convoy was announced going back to Bloemfontein, and with it came the chance for the soldiers to send back letters. Consequently, the early part of the morning was, in many instances, spent in hurrying off messages to those at home. Orders came that the regiment was to move at 9.30, forming the advance guard. It was two hours before the first shot was fired, but soon after the big guns of both Britons and Boers were booming. The firing lagged and quickened during all the morning, and at two o'clock in the afternoon a general advance was ordered.

The Canadians, with the guns and mounted infantry, were sent to seize a row of kopjes and to occupy a big one among them. If opposed, they were to lie down, but if not seriously hindered, they were to rush the position.

At once the mounted infantry started to move around the ends of the long elevation, and the Royal Canadians went at the centre of the position, while the Gordons paid attention to a kopje on the left.

By three o'clock there was a heavy fire from the enemy's Mauser weapons, and though the Canadians had made progress they were lying flat on the ground, to give as little chance to the Boer marksmen as possible.

Major Pelletier was in charge of the firing line.

The order came for the companies in front to retire. A retirement in a quiet way to a near-

by donga was meant, but the feeling of insecurity spurred the men to retreat at the double.

Something had to be done at once to steady the wavering ranks; something had to be accomplished to get the Canadian pluck working, which was in every man there. Col. Otter met the retreating soldiers, and, taking the right of the line, steadied them in true soldierly fashion, while, to the credit of Lieut.-Adjutant Ogilvy be it said, the left of the line was calmed to its normal condition. Lieut.-Adjutant Ogilvy had before been mentioned in despatches, and his action on this occasion was highly commendable.

With the temporary commotion settled, Capt. Burstall volunteered to take his ("B") company through a donga, and by a hidden approach capture the kopje which was farthest to the right. This attack was begun with "D" Company in support, well up. There was a snapping of bullets, but on the two companies of Canadians went through the donga, one section of men at a time rushing out of the hiding place with fixed bayonets, and up the side of the kopje, a distance of some five hundred yards. The manœuvre was successful, and as soon as all the Londoners had reached the summit of the steep rise they were reinforced by the soldiers of "D" Company, the men from Ottawa and Kingston.

Meanwhile the fray was in progress with the rest of the regiment and Col. Otter, while passing a stone-posted fence (of which the Boers must have had the range perfectly) was shot in the

right side of the neck and chin. He was standing up at the time, and the bullet, after slightly touching the chin, grazed the neck and knocked part of the rank badge off his shoulder. His wound was not so serious that he could not walk back to the field hospital.

The other casualties were: Pte. Defoe, "H" Company, formerly Royal Canadian Artillery, killed in the firing line; Culver, of "F" Company, wounded; and Lance-Corporal Burns, "D" Company, also wounded.

The attack of the rest of the brigade on the left had been successful, and when the other regiments got to the top of the position they could easily see the Boers in full retreat in the distance.

This was the battle of Ysterberg, and from there was beheld a fair sight of Thaba 'Nchu.

Thaba 'Nchu means black mountain, and, though it had greatly changed color since the days of the Orange Free State aborigines, it still stands out in its hazy greatness, a tower to be seen for dozens of miles. We could easily see it from the main street of Bloemfontein, forty-two miles away.

On Thursday, April 26th, Col. Otter and the wounded men of his regiment started back to Bloemfontein. The Colonel was met at the water works by Sergt.-Major Reading and a cart, and was conveyed back to the late Orange Free State capital, where he received the best of medical attention, as did also the men who were unfortunate enough to be hit.

On that morning, with Col. Buchan in command, the Royal Canadian Regiment moved to Thaba 'Nchu, some six miles farther on. The brigade started at six o'clock, but, on account of the Canadians' turn for baggage guard, they were not under way till three hours later, reaching the black mountain with the negro name at noon. The brigade made a halt under the shadow of the two thousand foot elevation, and some of the Canadian officers were able, through the kindness of the Thaba 'Nchu residents, to procure cups of tea at two shillings a cup. There was no time to stay for more than one cup, and the regiment was moved off to a donga close to a kopje, which commanded the pass by which the Boers were expected to retreat. Half of each company of the Canadians remained on outpost on the hill all night, and were reinforced at daybreak by the other half companies, but the enemy failed to be trapped, having trekked another way.

Gen. French, who bobbed up serenely all over the country at opportune moments, arrived with his cavalry in Thaba 'Nchu at ten o'clock on Thursday.

Friday the 27th, was spent in rest till long after dark, when "B" and "D" companies of the Canadians left their camp facing the majestic mountain, and set out with the Gordons to relieve a party of Kitchener's Horse, who had got into some trouble. With fifty extra rounds of ammunition the soldiers of the 19th Brigade started out, blankets rolled, carrying greatcoats,

and otherwise well-loaded down with this world's goods. They trudged on almost continuously till half-past three in the morning. Then the guide informed the officer commanding that he did not know exactly where the party of Kitchener's Horse were.

The two Canadian companies, well extended, after plodding along till seven in the morning, were ordered by Col. McBean, of the Gordons, to retire on a small kopje, and were told to take it at all costs. So with bayonets fixed they doubled across a series of ploughed fields (not veldt this time), and on getting to the intended position found only a few Kaffirs.

Footsore and weary, the men threw themselves on the ground and slept till half-past eleven, when they started back for Thaba 'Nchu, arriving there at two o'clock in the afternoon. They were recompensed by being told that the men of Kitchener's Horse had got out of their difficulty safely.

While "B" and "D" companies were out on this charitable, but tedious trip, the rest of the Canadian regiment were sent out to support them, but missed them, and did not reach Thaba 'Nchu again until eleven o'clock at night.

The Sabbath brought a welcome rest to the brigade, and to our men, and in the absence of church service the soldiers mostly attended to the patching of their clothes.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

CANADIANS UNDER SHELL FIRE.

THE brass-throated bugle woke the men before early dawn, and at six o'clock on Monday morning on the last of April they were in their places as rear guard of the brigade. The start was made northward, and the march was kept up for seven miles, till from Taba mountain there came a fairly heavy Boer fire. As the shooting increased the position of the enemy could be more easily made out, and it was found that they had taken their places for miles along the rather circular stretch of hill, and extended over each of our flanks. At noon the Boers could be felt reinforcing their left. Half an hour later they opened with their Maxims and "pom-poms" on both flanks.

The Gordons had become engaged on the left of the line, but at the right the enemy seemed to be extending, as if to get around the British flank there.

At two o'clock in the afternoon "A," "B" and "F" companies were sent around to the right, and in rear of the column, in order to prevent the Dutch from successfully executing their anticipated movement. These companies came under

shell fire in two places, when the Boers were firing at the mounted infantry.

When it was seen that the Boers' scheme could not be gone on with, the Canadians were turned about and moved across the rear of their own regiment. Here was the first and worst experience of heavy shell fire which the men of the R. C.R. had gone through. From our right at a pass called Hoet Nek, and some four miles to the rear, the Dutch gunners were sending their shells at a tremendous rate. A lot of them did not burst; if they had there would have been many fewer of Col. Otter's command come back again to Canada. Hairbreadth escapes were plentiful, and one whizzing shell actually passed between a man's legs, while other soldiers were stunned by missiles which just missed them.

As it was, the Canadians lost but one man, the promising young son of Col. Cotton, Pte. K. Cotton, of "D" Company, who was hit and instantly killed by one of the screeching shots. The Boer artillerists never did better shooting in their lives, and only the refusal of the shells to burst preserved our men from a veritable slaughter. In a first experience of such a situation a man, or a regiment, is liable to become discomposed, but shell after shell screamed through the air, and still the Canadian regiment marched steadily across that ground as if on parade. They did not lie down, but stalked on in review style. It was nothing short of wonderful!

Taba mountain as the brigade faced it ran in a

rather semi-circular fashion, with the ends curving in towards the British flanks.

There was a small kopje on the left of our position, and between it and the mountain itself a gully, then came the first rise in the mountain, with a ridge to protect our men from the Boer fire from the very top of Taba. With the sharpshooters to the right, our regiment went on under the shell fire, and met rifle fire intermittently from the front, but they had no difficulty in occupying the small kopje at the foot of the mountain, and here they remained all night, with the enemy sniping through the sleeping hours whenever the least opportunity was afforded. The men had no blankets, and only two and a half biscuits for two days! In such a position, with the snipers at work from the mountain side, it was necessary to keep very quiet. So the men lay, hungry and cold, noiseless and without the sign of a fire.

Orders for the morning were that the whole line was to advance at six o'clock, and consequently dawn saw them on the move. The regiments started down and into the stone-strewn gully and then began the ascent of the hill towards the ridge on its side, which was a sort of protection for our troops. There was no chance to advance in the regular way without being shot down by the Dutch in position high above. It was advance, but not standing up, so the men grovelled along on their bellies, with the wicked Mausers snapping in front.

The cracking, whistling and buzzing from the enemy's bullets kept up in front and later developed upon both flanks, sweeping across the lines of the regiments of our brigade. The Royal Canadians were on the left of the line, with the Gordons next, and the Shropshires following in order. In this fusilade, which was aimed at our men, Lieut. Ross, of "B" Company, and Pte. R. Irwin, of the same company, fell wounded, but neither dangerously hurt.

The shower of lead in the ranks of the brigade got heavier, and when it was coming a bit too fast for our friends the "Shrops" they retired. "B" Company was on the extreme left holding that part of the line, and they also were compelled to retire fifty yards, firing when, and as best they could, over the ledge which had protected them when their heads were not shown. The Londoners were on ahead of the rest of the battalion, and needed reinforcements badly, but for some reason or other the supports which they sent for were delayed for hours.

To the left of "B" Company (all the rest were down below and back) there was a considerable mound, which, if the Boers once took possession of, would be a death blow to our men beneath it. The Captain of "B" Company called for a volunteer to go and "scout" the position, and Pte. Clare Rorison, of Windsor, went forward to make the necessary investigation. He found none of the enemy in that exact spot, but he was soon made aware of the fact that the Boers were in a

painfully close quarter, for, as he surveyed the eminence, he got a Mauser bullet through the leg, which, though not serious, was enough to incapacitate him. To this same rise, Sergt. Sippi, "B" Company, of London, was sent with six men. Col.-Sergt. Wm. Holmes, of "A" Company (then acting color-sergeant), was also along, and this small party manned the vantage point, and, with the rest of the company, "potted" away at the Boers, when they could be seen, till half-past twelve noon. Then they decided to advance, which they did successfully, taking the crest of the mountain, when the Boer fire had become somewhat lighter. The Gordons came on with a rush on the right, side by side with the Shropshire Light Infantry, while the Boers, satisfied apparently with having held the mountain so long, got down the steep ledge on the side farthest from the ledge, and rode off, but not till the small party of "B" Company men had knocked three of the Dutch farmers out of their saddles as they retreated.

There was little, if any, firing from one o'clock in the afternoon till five o'clock, when the long-looked-for supports arrived, and "C" Company joined their comrades of the London district. With the "trekking" of the Boers the position was carried, and the Canadians, satisfied with the previous night on the hill below, without food, fire, or blankets, marched off to the plain beneath them and got the rations which were waiting for them, having had, as stated, but two and a half biscuits in all the two days.

The others wounded on May Day were Pte. J. Lutz of "G" Company, Pte. Letson of the same company, and Bugler Foster of "D" Company, none of them dangerously hurt.

The Boers were not without their losses, and chief among the captured and wounded were Commandant Lubbe, Commandant Banks, and Commandant Martinoff.

Lubbe, or his farm, both formerly mentioned, we had some dealings with before, since it was at his place we all but caught the Orange Free State officer when Col. Pilcher made a sortie from Belmont in February.

A whole German legion was fighting with the Boers that day, and for a time the British could not make out who the soldiers were advancing in extended order and in British style. For some time, and until it was known who they were, our men refused to fire on them. It was meeting them that the gallant Capt. Towse of the Gordons was shot through the eyes, losing the sight of both, his wife later having to lead him into the presence of the Queen from whose hands he received the Victoria Cross.

The 2nd of May was a rest for our men, and in the lap of the mountain they waited all day and late into the night for the convoy which brought along the staff of life in the form of hard tack, meat and coffee. On account of indisposition, Capt. Barker, of "C" Company, and Lieut. Willis, of "H" Company, were compelled to return to Bloemfontein by the convoy which brought the supplies.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

HEADING FOR KROONSTADT.

ON the morning of Thursday, May the 3rd, *reveillé* sounded at four o'clock, and the column was on the march at half-past six. We were a merry company. We had seen more fighting since Bloemfontein than any other in Lord Roberts' command, and the brigade was known as "The Fighting Brigade."

That night the column reached a small place called Isabellafontein.

Capt. Dixon, historical recorder; Chaplain Fullerton, Sergt. Dixon, and forty men from Bloemfontein joined the Canadians, having arrived by way of Waterfall Drift and escaping the circuitous route by Thaba 'Nchu.

All of "A" Company, in charge of Lieut. Blanchard, started back with a convoy as escort to rejoin the regiment, which they did in a few days.

The 19th Brigade this day was in reserve, with the 21st in front and the Highland Brigade to their left. We had gone but four or five miles when away to the front and right of us from an extensive kopje the Boers opened fire on our mounted infantry cantering at the base of the

enemy's position. All along our right this kopje reared its head, covered in places with trees, which were used as shelters.

It did not take the mounted soldiers long to get out of range, and without loss to themselves.

Away ahead on the same kopje the Dutch had a big gun, and opened fire with it, but it was soon silenced for some hours. The leading brigades of our column swarmed over the field in extended order for miles, paying more attention to a rising eminence in front of us and to the right than they did to the kopje, where the Boers now and again plucked up courage to snipe from. Our brigade, though in the rear, advanced in extended order, though not getting within range of the Boer fire. The affair resolved itself into an artillery duel, in which the Boers were not only outnumbered, but outmanœuvred also. The big siege guns which had joined our column were that day in action, and did some good work, and as the last of the Boers tore away our garrison guns sent in a parting shot at eleven thousand yards (six miles). A shell from a British gun in one instance emptied thirty-seven Boer saddles. Shortly after noon the firing stopped, and by two o'clock the reformed brigades started for Wekome to camp for the night, arriving after dark. For a few moments our brigade halted, and were about to turn in, when the order came that the deep and difficult drift which lay at our feet must be crossed. Once across this passage of the Big Vet River the soldiers camped on the high

ground, with "B" and "C" companies of the Canadians detailed for outpost duty.

Next morning (Saturday) at seven o'clock the men were pushing forward again, expecting an engagement at any of the great hills or valleys on the road. There was no place, in particular, where the Boers had planned to make a stand. It was a long, narrow, and, for us, an ascending pass. But the havoc which our shell fire had played with them on the previous day had demoralized them to such an extent that they were not in fit temper to stop running.

During the middle of the day, far across the mountain tops, we could see the town of Winburg in the distance. Every person wondered how long it would take us to capture Winburg, and when we would get there. About four o'clock in the afternoon the brigade came to a long and tortuous hill, and at the crest of it, and flocking beneath it, were the huts of the negro location on the outskirts of Winburg. The mounted infantry had entered at two o'clock, and the Boers had fled from it in all haste at noon—two hours before. It was a sullen little place, and as our troops marched through the town to pitch their camps on the far side of it, women stood at their doors and scowled and hissed in a noiseless way.

House after house was closed up, store upon store had its shutters up, while the occupants had gone with the now battered Boer army north before our force.

At the end of the week, Lieut. Kaye, "G"

Company; Lieut. Stewart, "D" Company; and Lieut. Pelletier, "F" Company, were obliged, on account of illness or threatened sickness, to leave the regiment and return by convoy, where they could get a rest from the hard work, and be better attended to than a man can in the field.

A party of Royal Engineers had blown up a small bridge on the railway line to prevent the Boers getting all their supplies away from the place, so that we were supplemented in many ways with the goods which the enemy had relied on taking with them.

A message was received from Lord Roberts on that Saturday night, congratulating the column on its achievements. The Field-Marshal (Commanding-in-Chief) said that this column had marched more than one hundred miles in thirteen days, that they had taken part in nine engagements; and that they were farthest north of all the Free State advances. He knew that they deserved a much-needed rest, but he urged them to push on and keep up the good work.

All day Sunday the soldiers flocked through the town and lined up in front of the stores after the manner of people at a theatre box office before a big performance, waiting their turn to buy provisions. For those lucky enough to get into the stores it was a feast after a comparative famine, but the others continued on short rations. Though the baker worked all that Sabbath, there was only enough bread for officers of the staffs.

Here, while the Canadians were enjoying a Sabbath afternoon rest on the sunny slope where they are camped, they were roused by the arrival of the ninety-three recruits from home. The newcomers, under Lieuts. Winter, Boyd and Carpenter, were given an enthusiastic reception, and hearty rounds of cheers announced their arrival to the entire brigade. They had reached headquarters nearly a month before, and for some time had been tagging after the regiment trying to catch up.

Lieut. Winter was posted to "F" Company, Lieut. Boyd to "A" Company, while Lieut. Carpenter was attached to "B" Company, since Lieut. Temple was to transfer to "C" Company, then in charge of Lieut. Marshall.

At five o'clock the whole column was ready for the road again. There was a medical inspection of the draft, and some of the poor fellows, so eager to get away with the regiment once they had caught up to it, were compelled to remain in camp. But they were not alone, for sixty-nine men had to stay behind on account of disability of different kinds, in charge of Lieut. Oland, of "G" Company.

It looked like a night march when the column moved out at that time in the evening, but much to the pleasure of the men, a halt was made at ten o'clock about six miles from Winburg, at Dankbaarsfontein.

During the next two days, Monday and Tuesday, the troops rested.

On Wednesday morning at seven o'clock the march was resumed north through the best part of Africa we had yet seen. Some parts of it were really beautiful. A herd of springboks scampered past, and brought to some of our battalion recollections of game-stalking at home.

The march was destined to be a short one, and by eleven o'clock in the morning we had passed the Boem platz (Tree farm) residence, converted for the time into the headquarters of our great General, Ian Hamilton, and we camped near a small grove and near a mighty rise in the ground, which hid us from the Zand River, some three miles away.

In the afternoon our guns, beyond the rising ground and out of sight, began shelling the Boers' position in and around the river bed. The Boers' guns, in good positions, replied at frequent intervals, and by the middle of the afternoon there were dozens of officers and men on the hills behind our guns, perched with their glasses all over the stones, which afforded them splendid seats from which to view the artillery matinee.

We had heard that the Boers were going to make a very determined stand at the Zand River, so that the advance, when ordered, was looked upon as no small undertaking. Our men were under a new divisional commander, for the division had been remodelled, and the former brigadier, Smith-Dorrien, was in charge of the 19th and 21st Brigades, the Highland Brigade had been taken out of the division, and the Colonel

of the Shropshires became Brigadier. General Colville, who had been commander of the division, was made Governor of Winburg, which necessitated his remaining behind. All officers looked eagerly forward to Smith-Dorrien's first engagement as a divisional leader.

Late on Wednesday evening the Derbys were sent down to hold the drift by which the British had to pass the Zand River, and as they went out our big fifty pound guns were sent out to be ready and in position for the attack when daylight broke. "C" and "G" companies of our regiment were sent out to support the guns, and remained with them all night, returning to camp early in the morning, when "A" and "H" companies were sent as escorts to the guns.

At 6.10 in the morning the first discharge of the fifty pounders shook the earth, and the Zand River engagement had begun. Soon the field batteries opened fire also, and the blue-white smoke of the shrapnel, and the dull, dusty yellow of the lyddite, broke like huge crashing puff-balls all along the face of the Boers' occupied hills. The best of cover was taken by the Boers that day, but wherever their fire was opened, whether from rifles or guns, our artillery replied in a way that was decisive. At one time I saw the smoke of seven shells that burst simultaneously within a radius of fifty yards.

The Canadians in this battle, other than the two companies with the guns, were given a position on the extreme right, a hill sloping to the

river. They went to the Boers' crossing at that point. They were disposed in a succession of five lines. Half of "B" Company, in charge of Capt. Burstall, supported by the other half of the company, under Lieut. Carpenter, formed our first and second lines, while "D," "E," and "F" companies were in rear. The firing line advanced down the slope of the bank to within five hundred yards of the river bed, and succeeded in dislodging about thirty mounted Boers. The Canadians were in a splendid place for the Boer snipers along the river, who, from their cover, were paying attention to our men. At a quarter past nine o'clock "D" Company reinforced "B" Company. The Boer snipers along the river shifted their position for some reason, to the great relief of the Canadians. As it was, Private Floyd, of "B" Company, was killed, and Privates Leonard and A. McLean, of the same company, and Private Armstrong, of "A" Company, were wounded.

At 9.30 Lieut.-Adjt. Ogilvy went to bring "C" and "G" companies from camp, while our regiment on the hill shifted more to the left.

Our men just over the crest of the hill and on the top of the slope to the river were returning the Boer fire, which was as sharp as the most heroic could wish for.

The bullets coming my way were cracking a little too lively for pleasure. About one hundred yards behind the Canadians' firing line I sat down, at ten o'clock, to rest, and here it was that

I was hit in the right thigh by a Mauser bullet. Then I was taken back to camp.

The whole fighting from our regiment was over at eleven o'clock, and by noon the Boers' stronghold had passed from their hands into ours. At once our regiments began to move across the rough drift, where the transports were busy crossing all that night, and the steady stream of ox-waggons and mule carts kept up till two o'clock the next afternoon.

On Friday morning "C" and "F" companies were left behind to guard the drift till the transports had all crossed, and they consequently did not start from Zand River till the last oxen had sullenly slushed through the stream.

Two marches and we were within sight of Kroonstadt, where the regiment lay camped, but four miles from the town.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

PRETORIA AT LAST—AND HOME.

KROONSTADT had the reputation of being the most beautiful spot in South Africa —a summer watering-place, but where its ill-founded reputation came from we were never able to find out. It was a regular country village, with all the component parts of an African habitation, and the one thing peculiar to it was that for a few miles the river was dammed up, and afforded the only boating in the country. This was the boast of Kroonstadt, and people far down the country referred to this popular town in almost sacred tones.

The Boers had got out of the place at noon, and Lord Roberts entered with the Guards' Brigade, and held a march past two hours later.

Like Bloemfontein, the largest buildings were at once turned into hospitals, and I had to accept the inevitable there, and lie up in the Kroonstadt hotel, which was also made a shelter for the wounded and sick.

A drive of seventy miles in a Cape cart over the stony ground had not helped to make my Mauser shot in the right thigh any better, but, thanks to the very kind attention I received

from my dear friend, Mr. Frederick Hamilton, the war correspondent of the Toronto *Globe*, and officers and men alike of the Royal Canadian Regiment, the trip was made less trying, and at Kroonstadt I received the best of medical care. It was my quietus, however, and after the rest there I was compelled to turn homeward with the bullet carefully concealed in my thigh, and to reluctantly leave the battalion I had been pleased to follow for so many months. Therefore I do not pretend to have been through the subsequent work which the Royal Canadian Regiment did.

Before leaving Kroonstadt, however, I was able to drive out to Major-General Hutton's division and to see the Canadian Mounted Rifles under Lieut.-Col. Lessard and Lieut.-Col. Evans, who had also been in the Zand River battle, and escaped wonderfully though miraculously well.

Meanwhile there was very little time for the Royal Canadians to rest, and on the 15th of May, General Ian Hamilton moved his forces to the east side of Kroonstadt ready to start for Lindley, whither the fast-flying "Steyn and Co." had taken refuge. It was the third place which the Free State President had made the capital of his country. By the next day the Canadians and the rest of the 19th Brigade had camped eighteen miles from Kroonstadt on the wretched donga-filled road to Lindley. On the 17th, the town of Lindley apparently considered that it was better to have no protracted siege there, and consequently the place was surrendered.

While practically filling the town with his men, General Ian Hamilton left General Smith-Dorrien and his brigade on the road, twelve miles away, with a corps of mounted infantry and one battery, to bring along the convoy with provisions which had been so eagerly expected. Christian De Wet's brother, Piet, sent word to the British that he would consent to surrender if he could be guaranteed the privilege of returning to his farm without going *via* St. Helena. This request was politely refused from headquarters, and the Boer leader, who had a dislike to ocean voyages, therefore went on fighting.

A curious engagement took place around Lindley as the British moved out north, both armies fighting in such a way as to form a double rear guard action—a thing very seldom heard of.

At Kaalfontein, north of the Lindley road, the supplies at last caught up, and as Smith-Dorrien was able to escort enough provisions to last past Heilbron, the forces on this right flank were able to cross the Rhenoster River. The British losses up to that time from Kroonstadt had numbered 60, and the Boers very gracefully acknowledged casualties to the number of 20, admitting also the capture of 15 waggons and 17 prisoners.

On the north bank of the Rhenoster, after having cut across a corner and escaping the march into Lindley, the Canadians next bivouacked in a deep valley within a couple of marches to Heilbron.

Rest was needed, but the work was too urgent

to allow it, and on the Queen's Birthday the 30,000 fighters, under General Hamilton, marched west from Heilbron across the railway, and became the supporters on Lord Roberts' left, while they had been before on the right of the Commander-in-Chief.

Two days after that the 19th Brigade stood on the banks of the Vaal River, the shallow stream which forms the northern boundary of the Free State. The men of the brigade waded into the oft-talked of river, and with water scarcely reaching their thighs, they soon stood on Transvaal soil; and the Canadians leading the brigade that morning were the first infantry regiment to step on Oom Paul's territory. Level grassy plains gave the army a suitable field for marching, but before they had covered the eighteen miles on which they were sent that day, the land again broke into interminable kopjes, necessitating a shorter march than usual on the 28th.

Early in the kopjes on the 29th, the Boers were astir, and by seven o'clock the hilly steeps, south of the main Rand ridge, eight or nine miles west of Johannesburg, were strongly held by the enemy.

A conference between General French and General Hamilton decided that the former should go against the Boer right on the west and the latter should break through on the south. The men under Hamilton were on their last days'

rations, and they therefore had to win at once, without further strategical moves, or starve.

On the stroke of three, the infantry move began, the 21st Brigade on the left, under Major-General Bruce-Hamilton, and the right looked after by the 19th Brigade, in charge of Col. Opens. The division was commanded by General Smith-Dorrien.

The Gordons led the brigade, and tramping over the burned and burning veldt they stuck grandly to their frightful task, but at 800 yards they were subjected to a terrific fire, which brought down nine of their officers and 88 men. When it is remembered that the British infantry loss in all was 150 killed and wounded, it can easily be seen in what a perilous position the Gordon Highlanders were. Still, forward they stalked, and before their glistening bayonets the trembling Boers fled in haste, while the guns behind the Canadians—the 81st and 74th Batteries—accelerated their flight. Viljoen and Delarey then made north with their bands of burghers in the direction of Pretoria, leaving surrendered to the British—but dearly won—all the Witwatersrand district. The Canadians, not having been in the lead, escaped mercifully.

On the kopje on which the Canadians camped that night in the dark the Boers had a big gun trained, ready to shell them in the morning, but being aware of this, Col. Otter's men were roused before daylight and had their transport on the move before the Dutchmen had a chance of send-

ing in any of their shells. The move that morning brought the brigade and our battalion to within two miles of the pretty village of Florida, on the Potchefstroom railway, eight miles west of Johannesburg.

Then the rations were gone in earnest, and in lieu of hardtack and meat the men were served with cornmeal and flour, to make whatever they could out of them. They had had no breakfast that morning because there was no water around the kopjes which they were holding. The arrival of the brigade near Florida was the occasion of a very large funeral in that spot of the men and officers who had succumbed to their wounds of the day before.

Lord Roberts sent word that he greatly regretted the shortness of rations, but that he would forward supplies as soon as possible. Meanwhile, the cornmeal and flour diet was all the men had. A dearth of hardtack and beef before this had been a hardship, but if these two army supplies could have been secured near Florida they would have been more relished than was the Christmas dinner at Belmont.

A couple of days subsisting on this fare was plenty for the men of the whole brigade, and they were glad of the move towards Johannesburg, where the bivouac was made five miles west of the heretofore thriving African city. A few passes per company were allowed the Canadians at the end of the week, whereby they might visit the city. A few of our men went

into Johannesburg, but the majority never entered the mining metropolis.

The Canadians had no chance of seeing Johannesburg after that Saturday night for, on the next day (Sunday, June 3rd), Gen. Ian Hamilton's march was resumed, and on Monday, the 19th Brigade, with the rest of the force, was going in the direction of Elandsfontein, were Gen. Smith-Dorrien's Brigade supported the mounted infantry under Col. Henry, and afterwards with the 21st Brigade behind them, occupied a line of heights on the western suburbs of the Transvaal capital. The other regiments of the brigade were pushed forward at Six Mile Ford, and the Royal Canadians were the supporting regiment. Then could our men see Lord Roberts' guns firing toward Pretoria, trained on the forts of the city, where the British awaited a reply, but the enemy trekked before the artillery fire, and before dark they were out of the British goal—Pretoria—with the guns from the forts.

Expecting to have more artillery work to do early in the morning, extra guns were placed on the kopjes Lord Roberts occupied, but with the morning dawn there was no necessity for them.

During the night, the 19th Brigade bivouacked close to the high kopjes they had been holding, and in the morning they marched through a valley between the hills west of Pretoria, and while the Canadians extended by companies, as they filed through the pass in fours, they caught the first glimpse of Pretoria. It had been the

objective point for months, and at last it was in sight, but a mile away!

Then in quarter column the Canadians tramped to the outskirts of the town, where the other battalions of the brigade formed up on the left, as did also the 21st Brigade, the hard-worked artillery, and the worn out mounted infantry.

Lord Roberts and his staff waited there patiently for the keys of the public buildings which were to be delivered at ten o'clock.

Gen. Hamilton in the waiting interval had said that the 19th Brigade was to march in first, but a delay till two p.m. changed the arrangements, though it was the means of allowing the men a much appreciated allowance of coffee.

Early in the afternoon came the celebrated march past before Lord Roberts and the Generals at Pretoria. Wearied and worn soldiers, gaunt from the hardships of many months' campaign, straightened as they strode past the Commander-in-Chief, and the Royal Canadians, surrounded by their old fighting friends, went past with the air of veterans. Like thoroughbred race horses, without an ounce of superfluous flesh on them, they took part in that grand march past which signalized the capture of Pretoria, whose occupation by the British the world had long looked forward to.

The regiment marched around the town, and close to the race-course where the many British prisoners had been before kept, they made their quarters for the night.

The Shropshires went away in support of some of the big guns, the Gordons were stationed in another part of the town, and that same evening the Gordon Highlanders' cooks gave the Royal Canadians the coffee that had been made for the Scotch regiment, since the kilted soldiers were not back on the ground where this refreshment had been made for them.

As a matter of fact Pretoria had fallen before midnight on June 4th, but since the hour of possession by the British came so late the formal ceremonies were not undertaken and gone through with till the day of the 5th of June, after the surrender of 129 British officers and 29 men. Report had it, and it was fully believed, that the Canadians and Gordons were to be two of the regiments to garrison Pretoria, where the British flag then floated over the Parliament buildings to formally mark the new possession of the capital.

With these distributions of the battalions of Gen. Smith-Dorrien's command came the practical breaking up of the 19th Brigade. They had been nicknamed "the fighting brigade," and since they were called this by members of other brigades, the compliment was highly appreciated.

On that 5th of June, Gen. Smith-Dorrien did not fail to congratulate the men and officers who had so gallantly followed him for months, and in brigade orders that night he was pleased to put in the following extract:—"The 19th Brigade has achieved a record which any infantry brigade

might be proud of. Since the date it was formed, February 12th, 1900, it has marched 620 miles, often on half rations—seldom on full. It has taken part in the capture of ten towns, fought in ten general engagements and on twenty-seven other days. In one period of thirty days it fought twenty-one of them and marched 327 miles. Casualties between 400 and 500. Defeats nil."

These were the words of recommendation which the General was good enough to give his men, as he parted from some of them for the last time.

Having been warned for garrison duty in Pretoria the regiment moved to what was supposed to be a permanent camp ground on June 6th. Then began a term of cleaning up, and the men, to be able to make a neat appearance, spent the next two days in washing their soiled, stained, and badly-worn tunics, but on the 8th came a new order, and the Canadians were sent on the "trek" again.

The brigade was practically gotten together again, save that the Suffolks took the place of the Shropshires, and with Col. McBean of the Gordons as Brigadier, the four regiments of the new command started out in the night, marching to Irene Siding. First the Cornwalls were split up in companies along the railway line, and the Suffolks were disposed of in the same way. Leaving these two regiments behind, the Canadians and Gordons on the 10th made a long march, and at Germiston made a halt for three

or four days before they moved on seventeen miles to Springs, camping at Boxburg en route.

Till on in August the Canadians were at Springs, where some of the officers of the regiment, and men from Cape Town reported for duty.

Whatever further fighting there was on their line of tedious and tiresome march, the Canadians saw but from a distance, though they were afterward placed in the 5th Brigade under General Hart, after having tried strenuously before this to keep up with the mounted infantry in command of General Ridley. Under General Hart the Canadians were in the same brigade with the Dublin Fusiliers, the Derbys, and the Somersets.

General De Wet was receiving their undivided attention, when, early in August, they crossed the Vaal again, and tried their best to catch up to the wily Boer leader. In one week the regiment marched 112 miles trying to overtake the Dutch commandant, but the task was fruitless, since De Wet with his mobile forces was able to sink into obscurity and elude his pursuers, as darkness flies before the sun.

Reveillé came in those days, as one officer earnestly wrote to me, "any time from ten o'clock at night to four o'clock in the morning, and oftener before midnight than after."

Keeping up an almost incessant search for the enemy, the Canadians were engaged till the end of August.

They started for the relief of Zeerust, and were recalled at Vlaakfontein; they began a new journey to Pretoria, *via* Oliphant's Nek, and when they arrived at Eland's River, they received new orders that they were to proceed by way of Krugersdorp.

At last the battalion *did* arrive at Pretoria again, and the next morning (August 25th) they were off once more, "H" and "D" companies remaining at Silverton, "A" and "B" companies at Eerste Fabricker with the commanding officer, with "C," "E" and "F" companies at Groot Oliphant, while "G" Company did duty on the armoured train. The first week in September saw this disposition of the Canadian companies, while Major Buchan and Lieut. Boyd were at Elandsfontein in charge of a rest camp. Thus in the last part of their stay in South Africa the men from Canada were stationed in broken parts, and in this state they were when the first intimation was received that at least some were to at once leave for home—the home our men were all glad to look back to, and most eager to start for, after a practical campaign in Africa of almost a year.

The unsatisfactory circumstances of the leave-taking of the first part of the battalion under Major Pelletier I shall not speak of here, since it would in reality recount an unhappy breaking up of what had been a most genial regiment.

From among the thousand men who formed that noble battalion will surely come to the

Canadian people a full explanation of the circumstances surrounding the last days of our First Contingent in South Africa. They are the ones to give the details as they were; but in this book I refrain.

The home-coming of both parts of the battalion was pleasant in the extreme. The six companies who first arrived—"C," "D," "E," "F," "G" and "H"—sailed from Cape Town on October 1st, and proceeding by way of St. Helena on the *Idaho*, had a more satisfactory voyage across the Atlantic for a month than we had on the way out.

Under Col. Otter, Major Buchan and company officers, "A," "B," and the newly-formed company "I," remained for the annexation ceremony at Pretoria, when Lord Roberts proclaimed the Transvaal part of the British possessions. The last part of the Royal Canadian Regiment sailed on the "Hawarden Castle" for England, where the greatest enthusiasm was shown by all who entertained them there. Reviews by the Queen and the Prince of Wales were followed by most lavish receptions and banquets, and the people of England were altogether only too glad to tangibly show their high appreciation of the Canadians who had so valiantly taken their due part in the Empire's battles in South Africa.

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The home greetings given to the First Contingent on its arrival home in parts is too well known to all the people of Canada to call for any

description here, for it is a fact that the thorough thousand received a royal reception on once more touching our welcome shores, which was as overwhelming and spontaneous as was the send-off given them when they were about to start from Quebec more than a year previous.

We have seen the First Contingent side by side with the bravest and best of the Imperial regiments, taking with them the hardships met with on campaign. They have upheld the honor of the country which sent them; they have made the name of Canada stand more prominently before the world than it ever stood before, and they have proved in every instance to be worthy of the name of loyal—Royal Canadians.

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